

Sketch

And now to matters of state



Simon Hoggart

IFTEEN while about how the Commons is generally three weeks behind the news. But when it's thrusting up to date, it can be even more embarrassing.

Yesterday MPs addressed the most prominent stories in the papers — Gaza's sacking from the World Cup squad, and the departure of Ginger Spice.

What happens is that they go into a self-conscious, aren't-we-daring, gosh, us MPs are human beings really, mode. Anne McIntosh (C, Vale of York) used a question about how sport can "combat social exclusion" to ask the Sports Minister, Tony Banks, what he thought about the exclusion of Paul Gascoigne.

Mr Banks, no doubt conscious that if he makes another splashy mistake he will be blamed for any Tunisia 5, England 0 scoreline, went all statesmanlike. His demeanour would have been appropriate for the subsequent statement, on Indian and Pakistani nuclear weapons.

It was, he said solemnly, "a matter of great national concern". Glenn Hoddle was to be congratulated on his "brave" decision, "and I suspect that the England team will do even better... without Gazza."

Moments later, Gareth R. Thomas (Lab, Harrow W), was on his feet begging ministers to join him in asking Geri Halliwell to "think again" about leaving.

(This is the kind of "I'm really one of the lads" questions that makes my teeth curl. Most Spice Girls fans de-camped to All Saints around four months ago, leaving the senior group as a well-loved but largely irrelevant national monument, like the Tower of London. Or the Dome.)

Tom Clarke, who turns out unexpectedly to be Minister for the Spice Girls, ran through a long list of the occasions when he had met the

impish soubrettes. (I wonder if they can recall every time they met Tom Clarke?)

He too took a measured stance. "I am sure this is a little local difficulty, which they are perfectly capable of sorting out," he said, echoing Mr Blair's neo-libertarian view that government governs best when it governs least. Harold Wilson would have set up a royal commission, or at least had the girls round to Downing Street for round-the-clock talks with beer and sandwiches.

Soon afterwards, Peter Mandelson made a quite extraordinary remark. For months now he has been banging on about a game called "Surreball" — the game for the 21st Century which will be featured in his Dome.

It now turns out that there is no such pestime. No rules, no players, no commentators, no equipment, not even a pathetic Gazza figure trying to drink lager under water.

Richard Spring, a Tory frontbencher, asked if this "fabricated non-existent game" was not "complete and utter surreball".

The Minister without Portfolio (who was, as usual, clutching his portfolio, marked Minister without Portfolio) does what he always does when caught out. He sneers. "The reshuffle beckons," he snarled at Mr Spring, before going on to say that "the Serious Games Zone will include the sort of 21st Century games for which the term 'Surreball' was an illustrative title."

What a magnificent get-out! Corman would say: "The £100,000 mentioned was merely an illustrative figure demonstrating the kind of sum I would hope to have paid you."

The Eldorado Mine does not, of itself, exist, but allows you to conceptualise the sort of gold-mining enterprise you might wish to invest in.

A colleague was in Notting Hill this past weekend, and spotted Mandelson in his Cool Britannia casual gear of white T-shirt, navy shorts, dark glasses and a little black backpack, like a 16-year-old girl off clubbing. With his high forehead, and Quentin Tarantino, "Mr Pink", brushed back hair, she said it made one of the most terrifying sights she had encountered.

Review

Flamenco proves it's back in style

Robin Denselow

Juan Martin and Mercedes Alhambra

Queen Elizabeth Hall

FLAMENCO is back in fashion, and rightly so. It is, after all, one of the great enduring musical styles of Europe, as resilient as the blues, and equally varied in its different forms and the still-developing fusions that have evolved from it.

It first emerged in southern Spain 500 years ago, after Indian and Arabic styles that had been moved west and north by gypsy migrations of Moorish invasions, became intertwined with local Spades and Jewish culture. From this unlikely melting pot there developed music and dance styles that were remarkable for their emotional intensity quite as much as their history.

Then came rock'n'roll, flamenco lost its mass appeal for Spanish youth, and there seemed a real danger that the music might lose its soul as it became a novelty for the tourist market. Now, with the nuevo flamenco revival, the music is back with a vengeance, and in a whole variety of forms.

There are those who are creating new music after retracing the history of flamenco and its early links with Andalusian, Arabic and North African styles. The acoustic Spanish band Radio Tarifa have shown some of the possibilities, while even the British Asian club hero, Nitin Sawhney, himself an impressive flamenco guitarist, fuses flamenco with Indian styles in his current experimental work.

All of those would have made welcome additions to the five-concert Arte Fla-

menco celebration of the new Spanish musical renaissance, on the South Bank.

The opening artist was Juan Martin, a one-time student of Paco de Lucia, whose mixture of new composition and historical works is very much in the tradition of Radio Tarifa. His instrumental line-up showed what one should expect.

Playing to a packed QEH, he perched on a stool, cradling his guitar, surrounded by his singer, Abdel Salaem, playing the ancient Arabic lute, the oud, a percussionist playing hand drums and the Indian tabla, and flute and clarinet players.

Their repertoire veered between the ancient and modern, from Sephardic songs from the 13th century through to self-composed pieces in which delicate guitar solos were matched against repeated clarinet phrases.

Then there were sections that veered towards jazz improvisation, sections where the guitar and oud swapped solos as they built up an almost bluesy riff, and sections in which the influences veered more directly to the Arab work, as with the treatment of a song by Lebanese's legendary singer Fairuz.

This was virtuoso playing, for sure, but with a difference. Intensity and emotion were there, in patches, but Juan Martin's skill was in creating unexpected textures and colours within the flamenco setting.

There were a few wild guitar flurries but much of the playing was thoughtful, stately and mesmeric — though the final work-out against more frantic tabla and oud showed that this "new flamenco" still has the old passion and energy.

Documents show advisers top priority was to prevent 'alarmist publicity that could do much harm'

Officials feared BSE panic

James Mallie

MINISTERS were advised 11 years ago to take a low-key approach in public about BSE — then a new disease — so as not to provoke hysterical demands for draconian Government measures and international bans on British beef, according to previously classified official documents.

Internal memos and minutes from the summer of 1987, released to the BSE Inquiry by the Ministry of Agriculture, reveal that civil servants and veterinarians believed it would be "inappro-

prised and premature" to impose restrictions on cattle herds. They were concerned about worrying people over health risks although "there is no reason at all to believe such risks exist".

But ministers said establishing whether there was a risk was of the highest priority. It was another year before restrictions were placed on animal feed and movement of infected cattle, two before all cattle of age were removed from the human food chain and nine before the Government conceded a possible link between BSE and human disease.

Eleven years later, "human BSE" is so far thought to have claimed 26 lives, BSE has been identified in well over 170,000

cattle, millions more have been slaughtered, and there is a world-wide ban on British beef exports, although Northern Ireland has just been exempted. The crisis has cost taxpayers nearly \$4 billion.

Ministers were informed of the disease in cattle in June 1987, seven months after Government vets identified it, although cases occurred at least as early as April 1985. Ray Bradley, a pathologist at the Central Veterinary Laboratory, Weybridge, advised in June there should be publication of findings on BSE "subject to the political implications being acceptable". The discovery should bring "deserved prestige" to the ministry, its advisory ser-

vices and vets. A minute of a meeting later that month reveals that Dr Howard Rees, then the chief veterinary officer, warned the Permanent Secretary at the ministry, Sir Michael Franklin, that he was "primarily concerned with the public representation of our response to the disorder... irresponsible, alarmist publicity could do much harm. It might also jeopardise our export trade."

Sir Michael, who retired in October that year, thought the best way to proceed would be a low-key, scientific speech to the British Cattle Veterinary Association, a short factual report to the Veterinary Record research journal, and investigations into possible

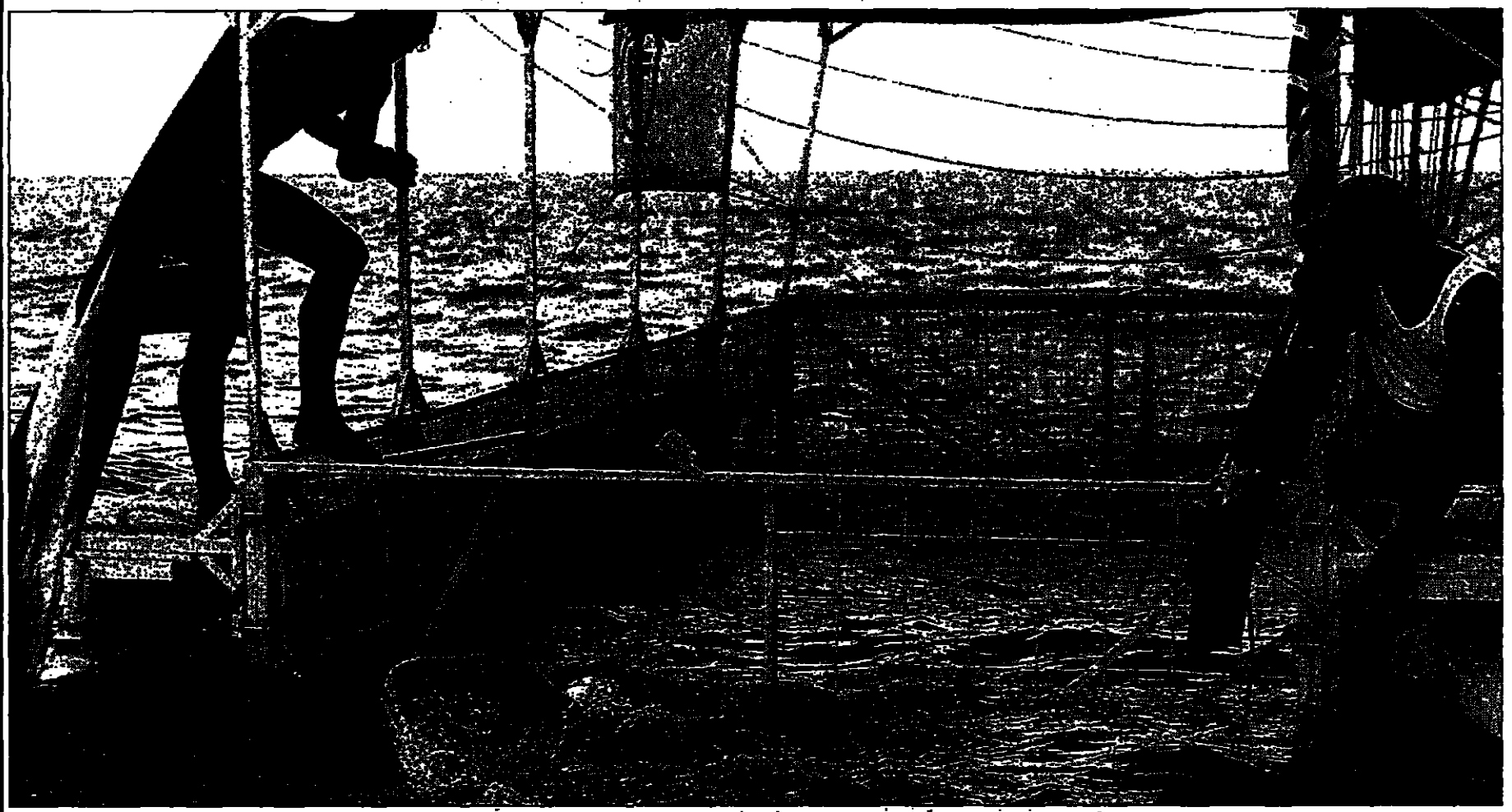
links with human diseases. Ministers should acknowledge the new disease and explain there was no cause for alarm.

In July a memo to ministers from the head of the ministry's Animal Health Division, John Suich, advocated a "careful approach", as "ill-informed publicity could lead to hysterical demands for immediate draconian Government measures." This could alarm other countries into banning British cattle, semen and embryos. There should be no restrictions on herds in the absence of knowledge about BSE and "a definitive test in the live host". There is still no such test.

Dr William Watson, director of the Weybridge laboratory, said in July 1987 that it would take four to five years to establish whether BSE could be transmitted to humans.

In records of one meeting, Donald Thompson MP, then a junior agriculture minister, suggested research might find the disease "acceptable" in terms of its economic impact. If an export risk was found, "we should consider asking the industry for funds".

Sir Michael told the inquiry yesterday: "I think it is very understandable that when you have a new phenomenon about which you know so little there is a danger that it can be misunderstood and misinterpreted."



Susie Maroney, with the cage designed to protect her from sharks, sets off from the Mexican island of Isla Mujeres at the start of her epic swim to Cuba

PHOTOGRAPH: CLAUDIO CRUZ

Lady in a cage sees off sharks to finish epic swim

Tom Gibb in Havana

AFTER a swim through shark-infested waters which lasted two nights and a day, marathon swimmer Susie Maroney waded ashore at dawn yesterday with nothing worse than a swollen throat. Her 128-mile epic from Mexico to Cuba set a new world record in unassisted ocean swimming.

To keep off the sharks and the larger jellyfish, the 23-year-old Australian swam in a cage towed behind a boat. Inside she had to wear a lycra skin suit to protect her from tiny stinging jellyfish, which can cause painful skin rashes.

She had originally planned to swim another 17 miles around the Cuban coast to Maria La Gorda.

But at the last minute she decided to make for the western point of the island. However, Cuban authorities told her to keep going a few more miles to the first small beach at Las Tumbas.

After she had walked, half-crawled ashore, she said: "I am all sore now. But it is just the best feeling when you hit land. I've been training for it and I love the challenge."

Throughout the swim, her mother and two brothers gave her encouragement from support vessels.

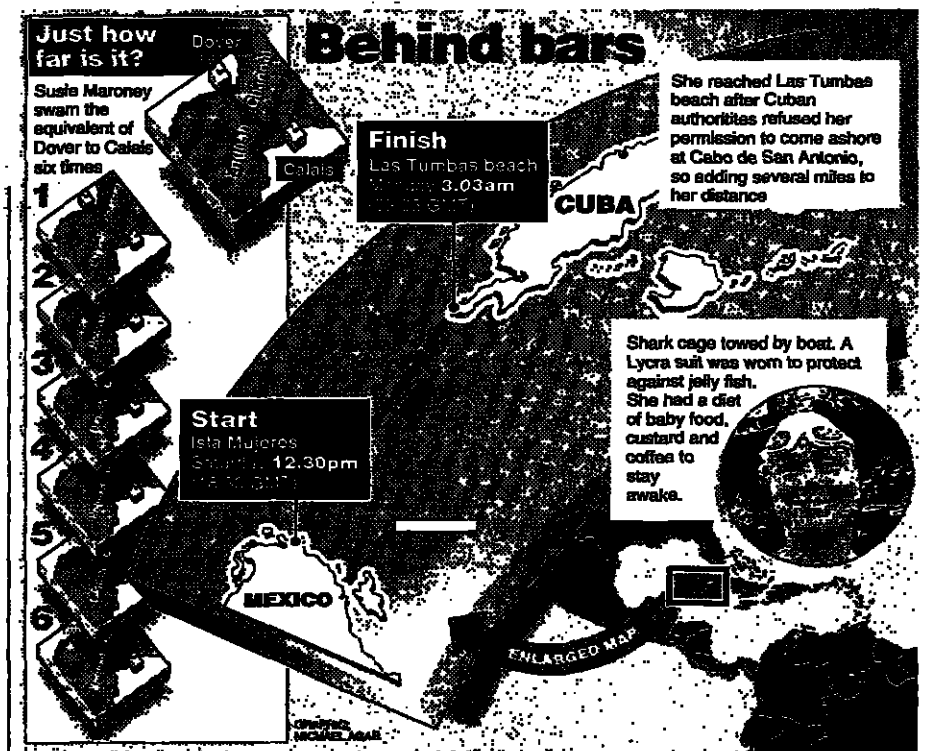
Her brothers got into the water with her to swim the last stretch, when she had to abandon the cage to negotiate shallow reefs leading up to the beach.

The organisers had been worried as she approached land about the danger from

sharks, which often feed around the reefs at night. But there were no incidents.

Ms Maroney's endurance swims in the waters around Cuba have made her a national institution. Cuban radio has broadcast programmes about her, telling how in her early years she used swimming as part of a treatment against asthma. Cubans were told how she prepared for her latest exploit with a diet of baby foods, marshmallow and custard.

She first tried to swim from Havana to Florida two years ago, but had to be plucked from the sea, exhausted, a few miles short of her goal. Last year she repeated the attempt, this time successfully, swimming 108 miles to Key West.



US-style district attorneys for revamped CPS

continued from page one reasons for which must be investigated," it says. Likewise, the few statistics available showed downgrading of charges happened most often in cases of serious crime, public order offences and traffic accidents causing death.

More than half of all acquittals in crown court result from the judge throwing the case out or directing the jury to acquit. Though there were often good reasons, such as a witness failing to appear, "the statistic is a cause for concern," the report says, adding CPS performance "is not as good as it should be".

Sir Iain's team found that the 1993 reorganisation welded the service into a national body. "Nevertheless we believe that the price paid

in the over-centralisation of management was too great. With the benefit of hindsight we conclude that, however good its intentions, the 1993 reorganisation was on balance a mistake."

A "teamworking" initiative set up by Dame Barbara Cresswell, who had not resulted in more experienced lawyers spending more time on serious cases.

"We estimate that the top 400 lawyers in the CPS spend less than a third of their time on casework and advocacy. We think this is undesirable."

The inquiry was unable to assess whether the CPS was to blame for a fall in convictions, because statistics were contradictory: Court Service figures showed a decline in

convictions between 1986 and 1995. CPS statistics showed the opposite. The report calls for one set of figures.

The chief executive will take over the bulk of the administrative work, leaving the next DPP to concentrate on prosecution and the legal process.

Some senior QCs have already been approached about the director's job, though the post will be filled by open competition. A Bar insider said Heather Hallett QC, the Bar's chairman, had been sounded out, but declined.

Mr Addison, aged 47, a career civil servant, will relinquish his current job as director of the Better Regulation Unit at the Cabinet Office, which he took up last

Main points

□ Chief crown prosecutors for each area in the style of US district attorneys, "people of stature in the local community" accountable for decisions and on a level with judges and chief constables, with as much freedom as possible to run their areas in their own way

□ A less centralised management structure

□ A new chief executive to take over the administrative function, leaving the Director of Public Prosecutions to concentrate on the legal function

□ Staff released from the burden of management and ex-

cessive paper-pushing, and allowed to get on with prosecuting as the priority

□ Headquarters role limited to setting the national framework, supervising resources and monitoring the areas

□ For central casework (which deals with the most serious cases) external recruitment, more staff, better training and improved casework audit

□ Takeover of the prosecution process by CPS immediately after charge laid; arranging the initial hearing in magistrate's court, seeing to availability, warning and care of witnesses

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Letters reveal scientist's compromising passion



The letters are 'the most significant' since those to his wife Mileva, here with Einstein in 1911

Evidence released in Russia has shown that the father of modern physics had a long relationship with a Soviet agent who was trying to extract nuclear secrets while the US was developing the atom bomb. **Martin Kettle** reports



Albert Einstein with his lover Margarita Konenkova. Einstein's autograph reads: 'sincere regards'

Einstein's affair with a spy from Moscow

THE "father of modern physics", Albert Einstein, had a love affair with a Soviet spy at a time when his theories were helping to produce the weapons which were dropped on Japan at the end of the second world war, newly discovered documents suggest.

The revelation of the affair between Einstein and the Soviet agent Margarita Konenkova comes from nine of the great scientist's apparently genuine love letters, written in 1945 and 1946. The letters, which have until now been in the possession of Konenkova's

family in Russia, are to be auctioned in New York by Sotheby's this month. Paul Needham of Sotheby's says the authenticity of the letters was "immediately apparent" and the handwriting and stationery are genuine. In the sale catalogue, Mr Needham says the letters are "the most significant discovery with regard to Einstein's personal and emotional life since his early letters to his first wife, Mileva, came to light in 1987".

Einstein and Konenkova met in the 1930s in the United States, where he was a refugee from Nazi Germany and she was an emigré from the Soviet Union. It is not clear when they became lovers, but by the time that the letters were written, upon Konenkova's return to the Soviet Union in 1945, their relationship was clearly a passionate one. In some of the letters, which are written in German, Einstein talks about the "Nest" where the two used to meet in Princeton, New Jersey. He also uses the pet name "Almar" — a combination of Albert and Margarita — to describe their joint possessions. In one letter, Einstein writes "the Nest... sends you its best greetings" and later he

writes "Be kissed by your A. Einstein". In another letter he writes "Just recently I washed my head by myself, but not with the greatest success. I am not as careful as you are. Everything here reminds me of you: Almar's blanket, the dictionaries, that wonderful pipe that we thought was dead, and all the other little things in my cell; and also the lonely Nest". Einstein was 66 when the letters to Konenkova were written. By this time he was a widower, following the death of his second wife Elsa in 1936. It is not clear how long their correspon-

dence continued, and it is unlikely that they met again after Konenkova's departure from the US in 1945. Einstein died in April 1955 at the age of 76. Konenkova was in her mid-40s when the letters were written. From the early 1920s she lived in the US with her husband, the sculptor Sergei Konenkov, whose work includes a bronze bust of Einstein which is still at Princeton University. She had met Einstein by at least 1935. But she was also a Soviet agent with the code-name "Lucas". In his 1995 memoirs, the head of the Soviet atomic espionage pro-

gramme in the US during the second world war, Pavel Sudoplatov, wrote that "our veteran agent Margarita Konenkova" had the task of obtaining information and influencing Robert Oppenheimer and other prominent scientists whom she met at Princeton. When the Konenkovs returned to Russia in December 1945 they were "granted special privileges by a government enactment in reward for their services to the Soviet Union". Sudoplatov claimed, Konenkova died in Russia in 1982. Einstein himself had no direct involvement in the Manhattan Project, the top-

secret atom bomb project centred at Los Alamos in New Mexico. But he had written to President Roosevelt in August 1939 suggesting that it might be desirable to develop an atomic bomb to rival German research in the field and he was widely regarded in the public mind as the presiding genius of the research. A week after the dropping of the atomic bomb on Japan, Konenkova visited Einstein, who was on holiday in New York state, and asked him to meet the Soviet vice-consul in New York, Pavel Mikhailov, who was in fact her controller. Einstein agreed and a number of meetings and conversations took place. The letters show that Mikhailov helped Einstein to draft a telegram which was sent, in his name, to the Soviet Academy of Science expressing concern about the dangers for world stability and peace in the new nuclear age. Although Einstein had for a long time shared the widespread view of the time that Stalin's Russia was a benign influence, he wrote in his June 1946 reply to Konenkova's description of the Moscow May Day parade: "I watch with concern these exaggerated patriotic feelings."

Nazi war loot 'under-estimated' 2m soft drink cans in poison scare

US historians claim new evidence about Jewish gold in Swiss banks

Martin Kettle in Washington

TWICE as much gold was looted from Jews and other victims of the Nazis as previously thought, a US government report will say today — and most of the Nazi gold reserve was routed through Swiss banks to other neutral nations to buy supplies for Hitler's army in the closing months of the second world war. The report says that the so-called Melmer Account — named after an SS officer who administered it — contained \$40 million (£24 million) worth of gold at today's prices, not \$20 million as previously believed. The Melmer account contained gold bars made from the wedding rings, tooth fillings and other personal effects of concentration camp victims. In another finding, the report will say that the Third Reich used roughly \$300 mil-

lion in stolen bullion — worth \$2.6 billion (£1.6 billion) in today's prices — to pay Argentina, Portugal, Spain, Sweden and Turkey for war supplies, including the raw materials to make machine tools and armaments. The report says that three-quarters of this amount was transferred from Germany through the Swiss National Bank. The report, which has been prepared by US government historians in the State Department, is bound to rekindle the argument about who should bear the blame for the outcome of wartime transactions involving gold and other valuables seized by the Nazis. Even before its publication, the report has set off another round of arguments between those mainly representing the families of Holocaust survivors, who want to pin the central responsibility on the Swiss, and those who say that other neutral nations as well as Switzerland must share

some of the responsibility. Jewish groups that are currently engaged in legal battles for compensation from the Swiss government and the country's three main banks say they are worried that the State Department is trying to "appease Switzerland" by seeking to spread the guilt to other neutral countries. Whatever the motivations involved, the report is certain to trigger a reaction in each of the other neutral countries. "Why was there so little co-operation with the Allies over looted assets?" whose involvement in the deals is charted in the report. Turkey's gold reserves, for example, went from 27 tonnes before the war to 216 tonnes afterwards, largely as a result of trading with Nazi Germany. "If neutrality was defended during the war as a way of self-defence," the report says, "why was there so little co-

operation with the Allies after the war in returning looted Nazi assets?" At the end of the war less than \$20 million of the \$340 million in looted gold and metals was returned by the non-Swiss neutrals. Switzerland returned \$58 million of the deposits transferred from Germany, instead of the \$300 million which the historians believe it received from the Nazi regime. Swiss officials are expected to welcome the report, the title of which — US and Allied Wartime and Postwar Negotiations with Argentina, Portugal, Spain, Sweden and Turkey on Looted Gold and German External Assets — strongly suggests the change of focus in the investigations. The report says that some other neutral countries, notably Sweden, fulfilled their post-war agreements to pay back money earned from the Third Reich. However, it stops short of proposing that present-day former neutral states such as Switzerland should pay back all such assets now. In Switzerland's case, such a move would involve billions of dollars in settlements.

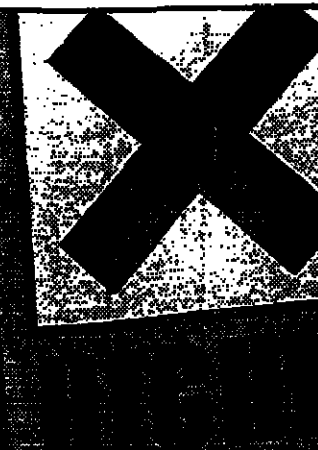
Jamie Wilson

MILLIONS of bottles and cans of potentially contaminated soft drinks were yesterday being removed from shops after traces of a cancer-causing poison were found in carbon dioxide supplies used to make the drinks. More than 2.35 million cans of Tango, Seven-Up, Coca-Cola, Sprite and Fanta, as well as thousands of bottles of Malvern and Brecon Carreg carbonated water, were being recalled by manufacturers after tests found traces of the chemical benzene. However, the soft drinks industry was last night trying to play down any health risk, emphasising that the drinks were being removed for quality control rather than health reasons. The scare was sparked on Friday after some samples of carbonated water were found to contain up to 20 parts of benzene in one million — twice the World Health Organisation guidelines. The contamination has been linked to liquid carbon dioxide made by Terra Nitro-



Off the shelf... many soft drinks have been recalled

gen (UK), which distributes to a large number of soft drinks manufacturers. The British Soft Drinks Association said suspicion over the quality of the stocks were highlighted by a mineral water company following routine testing. The firm told its supplier, Messer UK, but it took two weeks for the problem to be narrowed down because Messer receives carbon dioxide from several sources. Bob Snowdon, a spokesman for Terra Nitrogen, said yesterday: "There is a negligible risk to the public. We have launched a comprehensive inquiry to establish the cause of the problem." The company believed the trace levels of benzene were linked to carbon dioxide production at the company's plant at Severnside. A spokeswoman for Britvic said the company estimated that two days of production had been affected. Specific batches had been identified as potential problems and these were being targeted in the recall. A spokeswoman for Coca-Cola-Schweppes said it was taking action after establishing that the suspect carbon dioxide had been used in its Malvern water factory. The company was also freezing stocks at some of its secondary factories until full analysis had been undertaken. The spokeswoman said the problem had only affected a small proportion of its total output. The other carbonated water involved, Brecon Carreg, is sold both as an individual brand and as an own-label water in stores, including Boots, Tesco, Safeway and Waitrose. It was pulled after tests also proved positive. A spokeswoman for the British Soft Drinks Association said yesterday that a number of other manufacturers were carrying out tests on their products. The scare is believed to have caused widespread panic within the soft drinks industry, which has an annual turnover of over £6 billion.



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Think Wood

4 The most secret crime

The NSPCC reports that 70 per cent of paedophiles are closely related to their victim — and, contrary to popular belief, they were not always men

The epidemic in our midst

Child abuse has only recently crept into the nation's consciousness. In the first part of a four-day special investigation, Nick Davies establishes the nature of paedophilia

The most secret crime

IN NOVEMBER last year, every newspaper in Britain carried the story of how Scotland Yard had worked with police forces around the country to raid the rooms of teachers at private schools in search of evidence of their involvement in a paedophile ring. The more interesting story, however, was one that had never happened.

In the weeks before the operation, specialist detectives from the Paedophile Unit at Scotland Yard had discussed with Thames Valley the possibility of raiding a teacher at the most prestigious private school in the country — Eton College.

The move started after a teacher who had recently left Eton went to Thames Valley police and claimed that one of his colleagues had been indecently assaulting boys at the school. Detectives discovered that the suspect had been the target of similar allegations in the past, and that police in Yorkshire had seized a collection of child pornography and found letters from the teacher in which he referred to "sending the happy items".

Clearly, this did not amount to proof that the teacher was guilty. His former colleagues may have had a grudge against him; the letters in Yorkshire may have had some innocent explanation; other witnesses, who also suspected him, may simply have been mistaken. But the other raids in the series were being planned on the basis of similar intelligence, which Scotland Yard believed

was strong enough to demand that suspects be interviewed and their property searched. Yet when the raids took place Thames Valley held back in the Eton case, arguing that the evidence was too weak to justify action. The result: the truth about the suspected abuser was never found.

Earlier last year, the Guardian revealed the international police hunt for two unidentified men who had made the "Bjorn tape", a chilling video which recorded their relentless sexual assault on an adolescent Dutch boy who was carried in front of the camera, limp and hooded, before being strapped into a chair where he was defenceless against the indulgence of his two attackers.

Following the story, which was linked to an ITV documentary, Dutch police traced Bjorn's accent to an area in the north of Holland, where they combed through files of reported child abuse — and found him. It turned out that he had contacted the authorities a year earlier to complain that a Dutch man, whom he named, had been drugging and raping him since he was only three years old, most recently with the assistance of an English man. The Dutch man had been tried and — in the absence of the video — he had been acquitted.

Now, the tape not only proved that the boy had been telling the truth in all its grim detail, but it also confirmed the identity of the English man who had taken part. He is John Peters, a former soldier who went AWOL in the

early 1970s after being charged with having sex with a 14-year-old boy in public toilets near his base in Sutton Coldfield. Since then, Peters has been convicted in Denmark of a separate offence of child abuse.

Although Bjorn's Dutch abuser has now been tried again in Holland and convicted, Peters remains at liberty. Just as he evaded the police in Sutton Coldfield in the 1970s, so now he has evaded them again in Holland, simply by crossing a border. The result: the abuser has escaped.

That same story in the Guardian also disclosed the activities of Warwick Spinks, a British paedophile then serving a sentence of five years for abducting and raping two homeless boys from the streets of London. He had sold one of them into a brothel in Amsterdam.

Spinks is a paedophile of

grandiose ambition who ran an agency in Britain which sold boys to like-minded punters, and then by moving to Amsterdam where, as the Guardian disclosed, he worked in brothels and joined a group of British men who produced videos in which five boys were alleged to have been raped and murdered for the pleasure of viewers.

As he approached the end of his five-year sentence, Spinks was transferred from prison to a probation hostel in south London where, last September, he was asked to fill in a form so that the police could enter his details on the new register of sex offenders. Spinks, however, refused to fill in the form. He simply walked away from the hostel and sent his probation officer a postcard with an invitation to come and see him in Amsterdam. The result: another abuser has escaped.

The sexual abuse of children is a special crime, not simply because of the damage it does to victims, nor even because of the anger and fear it provokes in communities, but more particularly because it is so easy — easy to commit, easy to get away with.

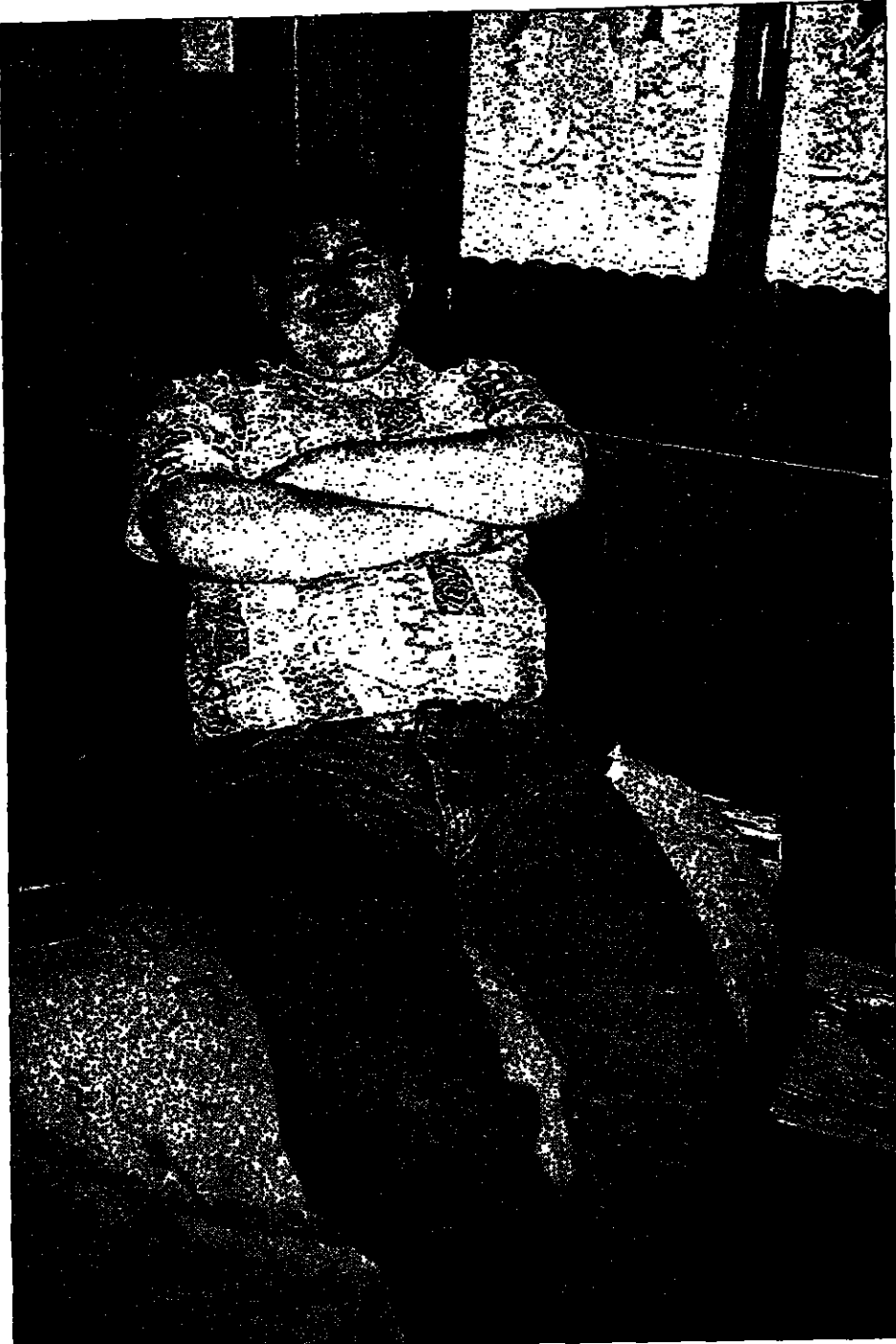
It is physically easier for a rapist to overpower a child than an adult. In February of this year, police reported that a paedophile had boarded a train outside Brighton one evening and abducted not one, but three young boys,

aged between eight and eleven. Police said that the man forced the three boys to get off in the village of Glynde, where he "molested them into the public toilets and indecently assaulted all three of them before threatening to kill them, raping one of them and putting them all back on the train."

Equally, it is easier to confuse a child than an adult. A woman who spent four years from the age of seven, being raped regularly by her stepfather, told the Guardian she had never thought to complain. "I thought it was normal, I thought everyone was going home from school and being hurt by their dad." Children have emerged from abuse to report variously that there was no point in telling because no one would believe them and they would be put into care or, conversely, that the abusive parent would be sent to prison, thus destroying the family and bringing hardship and misery to the other parent.

Children are combed by their abusers in a way that no adult would be. Bruce McLean, for example, who is serving nine years for indecent assaults in Cheshire, was using Manchester United tickets to entrap boys. A man who is now awaiting trial for producing a small orgy of child pornography videos in the north of England bought adolescent girls with Kentucky Fried Chicken and ice-cream, according to one who has spoken to the Guardian.

The ease of the crime is reflected in its scale. No one knows the exact numbers, but to construct a picture is to watch an arithmetical explosion. Start with a hard fact. At the last count, there were 2,100 child sex abusers behind the bars of British jails. Now think of all those who have previously been convicted but who have been released back into the community. You have to multiply by 50: according to the Home Office Research Department, there are 105,000 convicted paedophiles in the community.



Escaped... Convicted abuser Warwick Spinks disappeared on his release



Police last week confirmed that the late MP Peter Morrison (left) had been picked up twice and never brought to trial. There appeared to be no trace of either incident in official records

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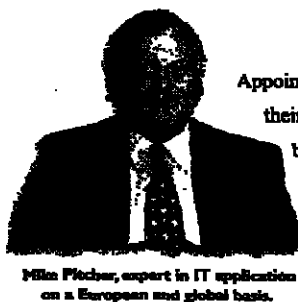
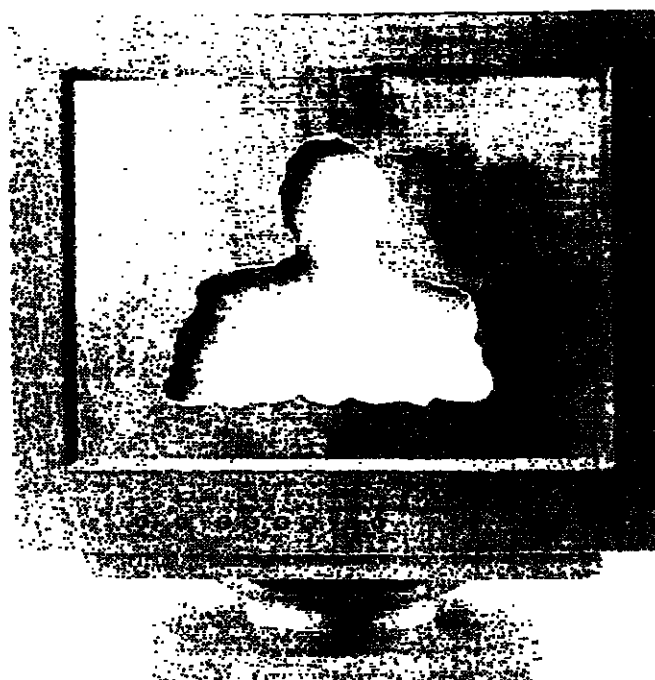
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The Guardian Tuesday June 2 1998

The most secret crime

that went unnoticed

There is clear evidence of some conspiracy, of the existence of paedophile rings, sometimes deliberately infiltrating parts of the child protection system



Convicted paedophiles (clockwise from top left) ... Dennis Grain, Terence Hoskins, Keith Laverack, Alan Langshaw, John Clarke and Stephen Norris. Right, how the press began to uncover the conspiracies in care organisations

Now, think of all the child victims who are conned and confused and never report their abuse in the first place; and all those cases which are reported but which fall short of the demands of the courts; and all those cases of rape and indecent assault which are convicted but which are not statistically recorded as crimes against children. At the most conservative estimate, the NSPCC and specialist police agree with estimates here and in the US, that the official figures for convictions record no more than 10 per cent of the paedophile population. Which means that today in Britain, there are probably 1.1 million paedophiles at large. Other studies suggest that the figure is very much higher.

This vast scale appears to be confirmed by "prevalence studies" which take samples of the population and establish how many were childhood victims of sexual abuse. In the UK, the US, Germany, Switzerland and Australia, studies consistently find that around 20 per cent of women and around 8 per cent of men suffered sexual abuse as children. In the current population of UK children, that would cover 1.5 million girls and 520,000 boys, a figure that is consistent with the projection of 1.1 million offenders. Child sex abuse is not only easy to commit, it is also easy to get away with. It is the least reported crime on the planet. Numerous victims say that they were silenced by their own emotions — the same emotions which gave the adult victims of rape, but which are magnified in a child's mind. Some children simply cannot report it: social workers in East Sussex four years ago found paedophiles deliberately targeting children who were too disabled to give evidence. Others had picked children who were terminally ill and who died before the system could catch up with them.

Those children who do report what has happened to them are uniquely likely to

find their stories rejected. Often, like the adult victims of indecent assault, they will have nothing but their own word as evidence. And the word of a child is viewed with suspicion from one end of the criminal justice system to the other. It is for that reason that the tribunal of inquiry into abuse in children's homes in North Wales is only now attempting to get to the truth of hundreds of complaints which were first made by children up to 20 years ago — to council officials, doctors, social workers and parents who, almost without exception, believed not a word of it. North Wales is only the beginning. It is now clear that during the last 30 years, children's homes in Britain suffered an epidemic of rape and violent assault. It was an epidemic that went unnoticed.

There are now thousands of

trying to persuade the police to prosecute three men for bugging him and passing him around their friends; when he was a 13-year-old in care. The three men have since been convicted of paedophile offences and have become involved in the abuse of children in Portugal and Amsterdam, where they shared their pleasures with Warwick Spinks. Police in Cardiff, however, say Conibear's story is too old to be proved. The fact that the sexual abuse of children is so hidden is not entirely the result of the age of its victims. This is also a crime of conspiracy, of the abuse of power and, from time to time, of incidents which suggest that a paedophile with prestige may be more likely to escape justice than a more humble offender. Fleet Street routinely nurtures a crop of untold stories

Today in Britain there are probably 1.1 million paedophiles at large

The most secret crime

men and women, in North Wales, South Wales, Manchester, Liverpool, Sunderland, Northumbria, Edinburgh — in 17 different police areas — who have come forward to make detailed, credible allegations about their childhoods of abuse in care. And yet, at the time, just about all of them were overlooked by just about every agency that was supposed to protect them — the police, social workers, the Social Services Inspectorate, health visitors, doctors.

The passage of time, itself, often allows abusers to escape. In Cardiff, Paul Conibear, who is now aged 28, is

about powerful abusers who have evaded justice. One such is Peter Morrison, formerly the MP for Chester and the deputy chairman of the Conservative Party. Ten years ago, Chris House, the veteran crime reporter for the Sunday Mirror, twice received tip-offs from police officers who said that Morrison had been caught coddling in public toilets with under-aged boys and had been released with a caution. A less powerful man, the officers complained, would have been charged with gross indecency or an offence against children.

At the time, Chris House confronted Morrison, who

used libel laws to block publication of the story. Now, Morrison is dead and cannot sue. Police last week confirmed that he had been picked up twice and never brought to trial. They added that there appeared to be no trace of either incident in any of the official records.

A lot of paedophiles are loners. The NSPCC found that 70 per cent of them were closely related to their victim — and, contrary to popular belief, they were not always men. Dr Michelle Elliott from Kidscape says she has dealt with more than 700 cases of women sexually abusing children and that she takes on one or two new such cases each week.

Academics who have analysed the history of sexually abused children on the At Risk register have found that one in three were assaulted by adolescent or pre-adolescent children. The Young Abusers Project in London, has dealt with one abuser who was only seven years old. Even though most abusers — whatever their age or sex — work alone, there is clear evidence of some conspiracy, of the existence of paedophile rings, sometimes deliberately infiltrating parts of the child protection system, often taking advantage of each other's political or social power to conceal their activities.

Research at Manchester University trawled the records of eight police areas in search of cases of organised abuse and they concluded that nationally they would expect to find 242 cases every year where children were the victims of adults who had colluded together to use them for sex. They noted, in line with other specialist researchers, that these official records probably captured only one tenth of the truth. It is these cases of organised abuse which present some of the most frightening incidents.

Some are never brought to trial — like the group of men who were believed by police to be abducting homeless girls from the streets of London in the early 1990s and holding them in a converted garage with padded walls, where they were being abused and finally killed. The closest they came to being caught was when the man who was said to be disposing of the girls' bodies, for £2,000 a time, was identified by Number Eight Regional Crime Squad, in Wales, as an ex-convict, a man with a history of spectacular violence who was living in Cardiff. Police investigated him but were unable to identify those who had hired him or to find evidence to charge him.

One came to trial only partially. Like Robert Oliver and Sidney Cooke and their friends who together abducted, drugged, raped and killed Jason Swift, Barry Lewis and Mark "Ridesley". They were convicted of manslaughter. Investigating officers were frustrated, first because there was insufficient evidence to convict them of murder and, second, because they were never able to bring any charges at all in relation to six other boys who, they believed, had also died at the hands of the same ring.

Often the links between abusers lie beneath the surface of less horrific conspiracies. Take, for example, the case of Greystone Heath, an approved school for boys in Warrington, which for years enjoyed an unsullied reputation until police finally discovered that it had become a hot spot for paedophiles.

It appears to have started in 1965 when a 21-year-old student teacher named Keith Laverack went to work there. Over the ensuing four years, he raped at least 16 boys, three of whom he shared with his colleague, Brian Percival, the clerk and storeman at the home. Once these two men had established sexual rights over the boys at Greystone, other abusers joined the staff: Alan Langshaw, who raped at least 24 boys; Dennis Grain who raped at least 18; Roy Shuttleworth who raped at least 10; Jack Bennett who

indecently assaulted two; and Steve Morris who assaulted an unknown number. The Greystone abusers then fanned out. Keith Laverack went to children's homes in Cambridgeshire; Alan Langshaw became Principal of St Vincent's Catholic boys' home in Formby; Grain and Shuttleworth were both promoted to other homes in the Warrington area; Steve Norris went to North Wales. At their new homes, all of them continued to rape boys who were in their care and wherever they went, they crossed the paths of other paedophiles.

In Cambridgeshire, Keith Laverack worked with numerous colleagues, four of whom are now also suspected of abusing children. Dennis Grain worked in Doncaster for the same group of private schools as Terence Hoskins

While he was Principal of St Vincent's, Alan Langshaw recruited a care worker named Edward Stanton, who joined in Langshaw's orgy. Stanton appears to have got the job through the good offices of Roy Shuttleworth, who was continuing to abuse the boys at Greystone and who is believed to have known Stanton from their time in Birmingham when they took the same course in residential child care. That course in Birmingham, in turn, is believed to have been lectured by Peter Righton, a notorious paedophile who attempted to legitimise his obsession in a series of academic studies.

Righton, for his part, belonged to the Paedophile Information Exchange, along with Jack Bennett who joined in the abuse at Greystone. Righton had earlier worked

Believes them. The evidence suggests that such abusers not only collude to give each other work and access to children, but also to infiltrate the child protection system. Peter Righton lectured not only in Birmingham but in numerous other colleges.

Before he was finally taken to court and convicted, he became a highly regarded consultant in child care and, eventually, the Director of Education at the prestigious National Institute of Social Work in London, a position from which he was able to have some influence on Government policy.

With similar cynicism, Keith Laverack, who opened the catalogue of abuse at Greystone Heath, went on to run the Guardian Ad Litem panel for Cambridgeshire County Council, with the job of representing the interests of children in court cases. This job not only introduced him to the most vulnerable children in the area but also gave him access to files on abused children all over the country. Terence Hoskins, who worked with some of the Greystone abusers, used connections with South Yorkshire police to get access to his own file, from the supposedly secret National Criminal Intelligence Service, NCIS.

Roger Saint, who spent years assaulting his foster children in Clwyd secured himself a job on the local adoption panel from which he could referee complaints about people like himself.

But this is only the beginning. Beyond the inherent difficulty of detecting and preventing this most secret crime, beyond the obstacle course of concealment erected by the collusion of clever paedophiles, the child victims of sexual abuse are betrayed by organisations who repeatedly prefer to avoid embarrassment by concealing awkward allegations and by a system of protection which simply does not work.

● TOMORROW: The social services chief who fought organised abuse and lost



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6 BRITAIN

In the wake of the damning Glidewell report, **Clare Dyer** reports on the fall in morale and efficiency at the centralised prosecution service

Ill-starred CPS became butt of jokes in court

THE CPS has been ill-starred since its birth 12 years ago, when it was set up to separate the decision on whether to prosecute from the police investigative process. Up to that point, both functions had been carried out by police.

Critics of the service believe it got off on the wrong foot because the government chose to set up a nationalised, centralised service instead of the locally-based model recommended in 1981 by the Royal Commission on Criminal Procedure headed by Sir Cyril Phillips. That decision, with hindsight, was wrong, says the Glidewell report.

The reorganisation Labour announced when it took office last May will produce a service much closer to the model envisaged by the Phillips royal commission 17 years ago, with 42 locally based areas matching those of police forces.

Not only was the model wrong, but the service was introduced too hastily and with too few resources. The market for lawyers was booming and inevitably the CPS, with

'There was too much monitoring and not enough prosecuting'

its relatively low salaries, could not fill its posts.

CPS lawyers, often inadequately prepared or with vital documents or witnesses missing, became the butt of jokes in courts. Problems were particularly severe in London, where legally qualified stipendiary magistrates were

Barbara Mills, then running the Serious Fraud Office, took over. The service was reorganised, reducing the number of areas from 21 to 13. It was from this point, according to Neil Addison, a former senior crown prosecutor, that things went badly wrong. Mr Addison was pushed out of the service in 1994 after writing a critical article.

The areas were unwieldy, corresponding neither to regional crime squad areas or regional court circuits. One area stretched from Chester to Windsor and covered five police forces. Crown prosecutors were unable to forge links with senior police officers.

Dame Barbara's enthusiasm for management was such that she took over the chief executive as well as the DPP role. The service became swamped in a sea of bureaucracy. Lawyers complained that they spent most of their time filling in forms rather than prosecuting — the reason for their existence.

"Too much money was spent on being a government department," said Mr Addison. "There was too much

checking and monitoring of work, and not enough front-line prosecuting."

Morale plummeted. In a survey two years ago, 75 per cent said they disliked the CPS as a workplace, 69 per cent were dissatisfied with their jobs and 89 per cent were critical of management.

The "unholy trinity" of Dame Barbara and her two senior managers made a fundamental mistake, said Mr Addison, now practising at the criminal Bar. "They fell for the myth that you could run the entire service, every detail of the service, from London."

There is a feeling that there has not been strategic leadership. There hasn't been a year since the CPS was set up when there has not been a fundamental upheaval in its organisation.

The Glidewell report concludes that the CPS "has the potential to become a lively, successful and esteemed part of the criminal justice system". But "sadly, none of these adjectives applies to the service as a whole at present".



Dame Barbara Mills... 'Fell for the myth that you could run the entire service from London'

PHOTOGRAPH: GAVIN SMITH

And lo, the biblical sum did not add up

Nick Hopkins and Keith Devlin

WHEN the Bible Code was launched, even the most grudging cynics had to admit something astonishing was afoot. The book claimed to have discovered hidden messages within the scriptures which predicted major events in world history.

References to the second world war, the Gulf conflict, the assassination of JFK and the resignation of Richard Nixon had apparently been found in the Old Testament.

The book became a best-seller on both sides of the Atlantic, and tabloid newspapers fought for the serialisation rights. The code had been discovered by academics and unravelled by computers, so it had to be right, didn't it? Apparently not.

In fact, it is probably bunkum. According to a new study, the first serious analysis of the book since it was launched last year, the code which unlocked the Bible's secrets has no validity.

Three researchers have discovered that the code-breaking technique called Equal Letter Skip could be applied to any lengthy book with the same results. The amazing revelations are no more than coincidences they say — and to prove the point they have used Moby Dick to "predict" the assassination of Leon Trotsky.

Initially, Maya Bar-Hillel, Dror Bar-Natan and Brendan McKay — all respected mathematicians — began scrutinising the book with an open mind. They studied the theory behind it, and then tested it.

The "messages" in the Bible had been found by Equal Letter Skip which works by taking the letter of any word in a given script, then jumping forward a fixed number of letters to a second letter, and then a third, fourth etc. etc.

When Ellyahu Rips, an Israeli expert in quantum physics, applied ELS to the Hebrew version of the Bible, recognisable names and dates seemed to emerge.

Mr Drosnin, a journalist with the Washington Post, heard about the findings and began to investigate.

To begin with, he was sceptical but was won over when the name Yitshak Rabin appeared next to the word assassinate — a year before the Israeli prime minister was killed.

Although this seemed extraordinary, Bar-Hillel, Bar-Natan and McKay insist it was chance, rather than divine intervention.

They argue in their study, published in *Chance*, a periodical published by the American Statistical Association, that with a text as long as the books of the Old Testament — Genesis alone has 78,064 — you are bound to find words, or partial words using ELS.

Professor McKay, who lectures at the Australian National University, applied the system to Moby Dick and found it "predicted" the assassination of Mr Rabin, Martin Luther King and Trotsky.

The paper is also scornful of Mr Drosnin, quoting from an interview to *Newsweek* magazine in which he had stated: "When my critics said the book was about the assassination of a prime minister in Moby Dick, I'll believe them."

The study will come as a huge relief to the religious community, which was irritated by what it regarded as the trivialisation of the Bible. Jonathan Romain, a consultant of the Reform Synagogue of Great Britain, thought the book was "too preposterous for words", and would become "a handbook for would-be Mystic Messiahs".

The study has also been welcomed by maths experts in the UK, who were reluctant to condemn the book until a proper examination had been completed.

Fred Piper, professor of cryptography and security at the Royal Holloway College, London, said: "One always suspected the book was nonsense, and this seems to be the proof. I don't doubt Mr Drosnin's sincerity. I think he genuinely believes there is a secret code hidden in the Bible."

But the study has not been welcomed by Weidenfeld and Nicolson which publishes the book in the UK. A spokesman said: "Some experts say one thing, and another lot of experts say another. I am sure there have been studies which back up the book's methodology."

At 11 o'clock, as Mr Jones made his way back to the house, he saw a light on in the mobile home where Mr Gear lived at the time, and decided to have a word. He banged on the door and then saw Mr Gear at the window, he said. "I just said to him, 'What's happening with your stie', and he said 'Fuck your stie'. The next minute the door flies open and hits me on the shoulder."

Mr Gear then pulled the door shut. Mr Jones tried to grab it and trapped his hand. "Then I went to the window and banged on the window, and it smashed," Mr Jones said. "I was annoyed."

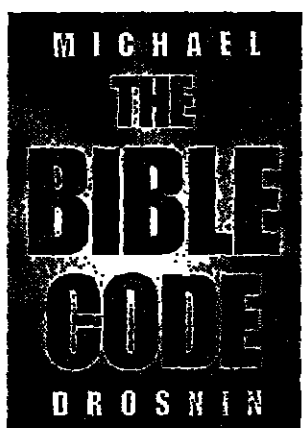
Mr Gear said that after Mr Jones bit him on the head he forced his way in. "He entered the mobile home and struck me with a punch just on the bridge of my nose," said Mr Gear.

"He leant over me while I was on the floor, and this is when I smelt alcohol on his breath. At that moment, he punched me again. I was very dazed and frightened by it all. I was asking him to stop it all the time."

He was giving me an occasional kick to the body and



The assassination of Kennedy... allegedly predicted in the Bible along with second world war and Nixon's resignation



How it works

THE method used to "decode" the Bible was developed by Ellyahu Rips and his colleague Doron Witztum.

To begin with, they searched Genesis using an Equal Letter Skip of 49 — where the letters plucked out of the text and used to make words were 49 letters apart — but subsequently they changed the ELS time and again.

The mathematicians looked through the text horizontally, vertically,

and in diagonals to try to find patterns. They found them. In pockets of text, they uncovered names of famous rabbis.

Rips and Witztum did some control tests, but concluded the results could not be put down to chance. They wrote a controversial paper, published in the *Statistical Science Journal* four years ago.

Michael Drosnin took up the and applied it to the scriptures, unravelling names and dates.

For the new study, Maya Bar-Hillel, Dror Bar-Natan

and Brendan McKay took the names of rabbis, and searched for them using ELS in a Hebrew translation of War and Peace. They found them.

"The astonishing result from Genesis can be replicated," said their report. The scientists argued that Rips and Witztum had not properly applied their ELS to other narratives.

They concluded: "Single words can be found not only in Genesis, but in any other sufficiently long text."

Nick Hopkins and Keith Devlin



The killing of Trotsky... 'found' in the pages of Moby Dick using the same system of jumping a fixed number of letters

Soccer star bit man's head in row, court told

Ramkish Nicol

FOOTBALL star Vinnie Jones bit, punched and stamped on a neighbour in the Home Counties village of Redbourn, St Albans magistrates court heard yesterday.

The footballer, who has played for Leeds, Chelsea and Wimbledon and is now assistant player-manager of QPR, allegedly attacked Timothy Gear in his mobile home after the 27-year-old tampered with a stie Mr Jones had built on a nearby public walkway.

"I opened the door, the first thing I saw was Vincent Jones's face," said Mr Gear. "He grabbed me by the shoulders and put his teeth

into the top of my scalp." Mr Jones denies the accusations. He pleaded not guilty to assault occasioning actual bodily harm and causing criminal damage to Mr Gear's caravan.

He told the court they had "thrashed around" on the floor after Mr Gear swore at him. "It was not a fight, it was more like a trial of strength. There were no punches thrown by either of us."

The footballer, who has lived since 1994 with his wife and two children in the house in Hertfordshire and his father built, spent November 11 last year shooting on another property. He told the court he had visited two pubs that night but had only had a

glass of wine and half a Guinness because he was driving. In the second pub he met his gardener, who he said was upset because Mr Gear, who runs a riding school next to Mr Jones' house, had removed a stie the footballer had built to stop fly-tipping.

At 11 o'clock, as Mr Jones made his way back to the house, he saw a light on in the mobile home where Mr Gear lived at the time, and decided to have a word. He banged on the door and then saw Mr Gear at the window, he said. "I just said to him, 'What's happening with your stie', and he said 'Fuck your stie'. The next minute the door flies open and hits me on the shoulder."

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Mr Gear said that after Mr Jones bit him on the head he forced his way in. "He entered the mobile home and struck me with a punch just on the bridge of my nose," said Mr Gear.

"He leant over me while I was on the floor, and this is when I smelt alcohol on his breath. At that moment, he punched me again. I was very dazed and frightened by it all. I was asking him to stop it all the time."

He was giving me an occasional kick to the body and

thighs... the abuse carried on language-wise and then he tried to stamp on my head. He managed to do that successfully three or four times."

Both agree that the fight was broken up by neighbour Pauline Baron who had just arrived home from work. "They were pushing and shoving each other," she told the court. "I said 'For f... sake stop it, you'll wake up my family'."

When they kept pushing each other she walked away and then, seeing her husband had woken up, returned. She pushed Mr Jones out.

Mr Gear then went to his parents' house, who called the police. Mr Jones was charged and kept overnight.

The case continues today.

Vinnie Jones pleaded not guilty in court yesterday

PHOTOGRAPH: SEAN SMITH

Firemen find body of girl, 12

POLICE were last night hunting the killer of a 12-year-old girl who set fire to her body after abducting and murdering her.

The remains of Lauren Carhart were found on wasteland behind a garage in Crumpsall, Manchester.

Detectives believe she may have been kidnapped as she walked home from a nearby tram stop after a day out in the city centre.

Police were interviewing a man in connection with the murder but he had not been arrested. They had also spoken to a friend of the dead girl's who had been due to accompany her home.

A post mortem examination was held yesterday but the results were not released. It is understood the body was so badly burned that formal identification would only be possible through dental records but neighbours named Lauren as the victim.

A neighbour, Carol Power, said: "It's difficult for me to talk about it because I knew her quite well and I'm grieving for her. I think it's terrible because she was such a lovely little girl. My grandson was often out playing with her. The family are absolutely devastated."

Another neighbour said: "You used to see her around quite a lot. She had a 16-year-old boyfriend, but I think they may have split up quite recently."

"She was popular with the other kids and was never in any trouble."

"I've got kids myself and when I heard how it might have happened, on the way back from the tram, I thought there but for the grace of God, I'm sure her mum, Jill, will be in pieces."

Lauren, who was a pupil at nearby Abraham Moss high school, was reported missing early yesterday when she failed to return home from a trip into central Manchester.

Four hours earlier, at 8pm, the fire brigade were called to a fire on wasteland which at first they thought was blazing rubbish. It is understood police found clothing and jewellery belonging to Lauren at the scene.

Yesterday flowers were laid outside the garage, MBM Motors, and it was sealed off as police forensic teams examined the wasteland behind.

Dogs' dinner bites at quarantine laws

Ian Black
Diplomatic Editor

IT is being billed as the diplomatic event of the season, but one with unusual bite. Forget omelettes and champagne and bring a bone, for the Czech ambassador is hosting a pet party.

The bash on June 21 has been arranged for Cutty, an 11-year-old grey schnauzer owned by envoy Pavel Seifert, coming home after six lonely months in quarantine.

Joining the chaps in pin-stripes and their pets on the ambassador's lawn in Hampstead, north London, will be the former Hong Kong governor, Chris Patten, a critic of the quarantine laws after leaving his Norfolk terriers, Whiskey and Soda, in France rather than consigning them to six months in the kennels.

Czechs are working hard but discreetly to prove their credentials for membership of Nato and the European Union, but they are making it clear that Britain's anti-rabies laws should go. "Obviously we cannot be political, but we do sympathise with all the poor animals that have to go through this ordeal."

said press councillor Zdena Gabalova, whose French bulldog, Eddie, is also celebrating his freedom.

Even the most anglophile of foreign envoys are exercised by the quarantine laws. Former American ambassador Ray Seitz once complained they were a "dog's breakfast".

Personal tragedies have brought breaches of protocol: Henrik Sorensen, a Danish attaché, called for change after the death of his daughter's pet spitzel in a West Sussex kennel.

Campaigners led by Lady Fretwell, wife of a former British ambassador to France, say nearly 100 pets a year die separated from their owners and home comforts.

The Czech embassy points out that Cutty and Eddie will have no problems when they return home or in the transit countries of France and Germany, where pet passports and anti-rabies vaccination records are accepted.

"We have had some answers already from guests who are coming with their dogs," Ms Gabalova said last night. "But we don't yet know what breeds they are."

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Reformist win in Montenegro puts Milosevic at risk

Jonathan Steele
in Podgorica

SLOBODAN Milosevic has suffered a blow from voters in Montenegro that could destroy what remains of the Yugoslav Federation and prevent his re-election as its president.

They gave the reformist parties a big enough majority in Sunday's parliamentary elections to block constitutional changes and undercut Mr Milosevic's power.

Fears that he might refuse to accept the result and use the army to impose a state of emergency waned when his ally Momir Bulatovic, the head of the losing Socialist National Party, acknowledged defeat.

These polls could not be considered either free or fair, because of the media blockade and police harassment, but the counting was in order and the party will accept the will of the people, Mr Bulatovic said.

His supporters, who tend to be elderly workers in now-closed state factories, sat glumly outside the party's headquarters after the polls closed, but as defeat sank in they drifted away without a fight.

Montenegro's young president, Milo Djukanovic, had urged his supporters not to gloat and only a few fired victory shots into the air in the early hours.

A handful of cars drove round town with banners supporting his slogan "For a Better Life".

But off the streets the celebration was intense and in the police headquarters bottles of rak were being passed around as officers sang Montenegrin victory songs. Support from the police is a strong element in Mr Djukanovic's confidence in resisting pressures from Belgrade.

The Milosevic factor was a main campaign issue. Walls were plastered with posters showing his eyes and nose in close-up and the word "Enough".

Mr Djukanovic, who has won strong support internationally, says he wants to democratise Yugoslavia and make common cause with the pro-European parties in the Serbian opposition. He has threatened to leave Yugoslavia if reforms go on being blocked. This would end the federation, since the other four



Communist who became a capitalist king

MILU DJUKANOVIC (above) became the world's youngest prime minister in 1991, aged 29. An economics graduate, he was then a member of the ruling Socialist Party — the former communists.

On the eve of Yugoslavia's disintegration he was a virulent nationalist, indistinguishable from Slobodan Milosevic.

During the Bosnian war, Montenegro was a route for smuggling petrol and cigarettes to Serbia and Mr Djukanovic became wealthy by controlling the legal and illegal commerce.

But after three terms in office he saw Yugoslavia's economic plight and blamed Mr Milosevic's blocking reforms.

Attacking Mr Milosevic's xenophobia and his exploitation of the myth of Serbs as everyone's victim, he said: "We must turn the criticism directed against us on to ourselves. We must sober up and awaken from our legends and dreams."

republics left six years ago when Mr Milosevic started on his failed crusade for a "Greater Serbia".

Mr Djukanovic has been ambiguous on whether Montenegro will secede. He says he is against it, as long as there is a chance of the federation becoming a modern democracy with a full market economy.

"Do you want to live under the yoke of Milosevic and his wife as outcasts from the

world or as a free and proud people in a reformed, democratic state," he asked at an election rally.

Montenegro, which has only 650,000 people compared with Serbia's 10 million, is dependent on Serbia for electricity, raw materials and food. But it has a stunning coastline and could benefit from tourism.

Mr Djukanovic's party had just under 50 per cent of the vote after 94 per cent of the ballots were counted, but it can rely on support for a clear majority from a handful of MPs representing the Albanian minority, and the Liberal Alliance, which favours full independence.

The result creates a new crisis for Mr Milosevic. He has been hoping to change the constitution to take control of Montenegro's police and give himself the right to a second term as president.

This now looks impossible. Under Yugoslavia's post-communist constitution, Montenegro has 20 seats, the same as Serbia, in the upper house of the federal assembly.

Having recently ended the hardline and semi-fascist Serbian Radical Party into the Serbian government, Mr Milosevic controls some 15 of the Serbian seats.

He needed at least 12 from Montenegro for the two-thirds majority required to change the constitution. But Sunday's results barely give him the six extra he needs to pass legislation, which can be done by simple majority.

Mr Djukanovic's first move at the federal level may be to try to unseat Mr Bulatovic, the recently appointed federal prime minister. The Montenegrin government refuses to accept the move, which was made in the dying days of the last federal assembly.

He may also question Mr Milosevic's policy on Kosovo. Mr Djukanovic supports the idea of international mediation, rejected so far by Belgrade.

The Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe applauded the integrity and lack of violence in the election, though it rebuked Mr Djukanovic for the way his party used state television and the main newspaper for one-sided news coverage and to denigrate the Bulatovic camp.

But it said that Serbian state media, which can be seen here, countered with equally biased coverage.



A supporter celebrates Milo Djukanovic's win in Sunday's poll

Tsar's burial faces royal Russian snub

Doubt about the authenticity of the remains may prompt a boycott, writes James Meek in Moscow

BICKERING among the key participants in Russia's first royal funeral for more than a century means that many important guests — including Boris Yeltsin — may not turn up.

The remains of Tsar Nicholas II, his family and their servants, executed in a cellar in Yekaterinburg by Bolsheviks in 1918, are due to be buried before a host of Russian dignitaries, European royals and Orthodox priests in St Petersburg's Peter and Paul cathedral on July 1.

But the head of the Russian Orthodox Church, Patriarch Alexy II, has said he may not be able to attend. He is under pressure from conservatives in the Church who refuse to believe that the exhaustive tests made on the remains — essentially bones — prove they are from members of the Romanov family.

A decision on the patriarch's involvement will be taken by the Orthodox synod next week but Mr Yeltsin has suggested that he is unlikely to take part if Alexy is not there.

If the patriarch does not attend, it is not clear which members of the priesthood will conduct the ceremony, an elaborate ritual partly based on the last Russian royal burial, of Nicholas' father Alexander, in 1894.

Yesterday the self-styled head of the Russian royal house, Grand Duchess Maria Vladimirovna, said that she might not attend the funeral either. One of the main factors in her decision would be whether or not the patriarch and the president were there.

The grand duchess is a direct descendant of Nicholas' uncle, Kirill Vladimirovich. Her son, George, is seen as the most plausible — but by no means the only — pretender to the dormant Russian throne.

Her secretary, Alexander Zakatov, said that she was displeased with the guest list, which had been made "without any logic, with the use of fake titles and in violation of the family traditions".

There are rival claimants to the Romanov title and some monarchists cast doubt on Maria Vladimirovna's claim to head the royal house. They say that her father, Vladimir Kirillovich, the nephew of Nicholas II, made an unsuitable marriage to her mother Leonida Georgievna.

Tsars have to marry their own level of blue blood, or the marriage is declared "morganatic", thus disbarring their issue from a claim to the possessions or title of the father.

Leonida Georgievna's father was from a Georgian noble family, the Bagration-Mukhranski, a family with no rights to either the Russian or the Georgian throne.

The ghost of the last tsar began to haunt Mr Yeltsin before he became president. It was when he ruled Yekaterinburg — then known as Sverdlovsk — in communist times that the house where the Romanovs were shot was demolished to prevent it becoming a shrine. Before the burial site was chosen there was an unseemly row between the governors of St Petersburg, Moscow and Yekaterinburg for the right to have the tsar's last resting place.

It is understood that Russia intends to invite all Europe's monarchs to the funeral, including Queen Elizabeth.

But Prince Andrew said during a visit to the Peter and Paul Cathedral at the weekend that Buckingham Palace had not received a formal invitation and until it did no decision would be taken on who would attend.



Maria Vladimirovna: Unhappy about guest list

Revolution is no picnic for France's secretive, growing Trotskyist 'sect'

Jon Henley visits a fair in Presles where people use pseudonyms and punters at the shooting stand take potshots at politicians

IT IS just a country fair. Families stroll around munching candyfloss, crapes or perhaps a Lyons-style sausage; merry-makers stretch out on the grass in front of the stage while a singer performs George Bransons numbers; others spend a couple of francs at the shooting stand.

Then you notice the signposts dotted around the grounds: Place Karl Marx, Allée du drapeau rouge, Place du prolétariat, Place octobre 1917.

And the stands: Workers' Liberty, Internationalist Perspective, Communist Revolutionary League, Bolshevik Tendency. Oh, and at the shooting stand and the darts booth you can take potshots at caricatures of the prime minister, Lionel Jospin, or spear the president, Jacques Chirac.

There are not many fairs in the air at the annual fair of France's main revolutionary Trotskyist party, Lutte Ouvrière (Workers' Fight). People are mostly warm, friendly and helpful. But everyone wants, in the words of the programme, "not to reform this unjust and oppressive society, but to shatter it".

This is the fair's 28th year and the crowds are getting bigger. Organisers expected 30,000 people to travel to the Chateau de Presles, 40 minutes' north of Paris, at the weekend.

The happy mood reflects the party's growing electoral success: in the 1995 presidential election its most prominent member, Arlette Laguiller, won 5.3 per cent of the vote, while in March's regional polls it won nearly 5 per cent and captured 20 seats on regional councils.

Its platform included raising corporate taxes to 50 per cent, halting mass redundancies, raising higher-level income tax, scrapping banking secrecy laws and "creating hundreds and thousands of useful jobs".

But with success has come suspicion. Lutte Ouvrière's 7,000 members could constitute a sect, said Le Monde this week. The leftwing Liberation accused it of being "France's most secretive political organisation".

It has, certainly, no headquarters where the public can go for information, just a post box number. Its leaders adopt pseudonyms. There is a telephone number, but you need to know who to call for it. Party members usually return calls from public phone boxes.

In the words of one member, militants "live as if the police were spying on them".

French media have talked of tests that must be passed before a prospective member can join: selling the party newspaper, gaining contacts. Members are asked to make "special financial contributions". Women who are serious about political activity are,

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Journalists are a long way removed from workers, that's the problem. We are an annoyance for the bourgeoisie and for the Party that's why they write this stuff."

She defends the secrecy: "Many of our members, particularly the younger ones, have a prurient interest in the Party. It's not police repression we fear, it's corporate repression."

Nonetheless, not many people want to give their names to a British journalist. "Call me Gloria," says one woman. "That sounds reasonable." A man behind a British-run stand serving tea refuses to give even a pseudonym.

"People like you, most people, don't understand that it's possible to devote your life to organising your life around your political beliefs," he says. "They won't ever understand."

José and Brigitte, from Lille, are happy to give their first names.

"We come for the debates, for the exchange of ideas, for the explanations of complicated subjects from scientists and experts," says José. "They explain things so ordinary people can understand them. You leave here full of hope."

Then he asks for a copy of the article. "Send it to the Lutte Ouvrière PO box," he says. "You can't be too careful."

They have nothing to complain about," a middle-aged man said as he waited for a hired car ordered by Air France because of a cancelled provincial link. "They get as much as company chairmen."

Air France, which carries about 100,000 passengers on a normal day, expects to lose about £10 million a day during the strike.

The pilots' spokesman, Christian Paris, shrugged off the unfavourable public reaction and blamed government incompetence, saying that no real attempt had been made to study the pilots' complaints.

Company officials said that, despite cancelling about 80 per cent of international flights, they expected to improve services from today. Flanes and crews will be hired from other airlines.

The air strike is among several potential industrial protests as the World Cup approaches. Railworkers begin a week's action today, mainly in the Mediterranean area.

Outrage at Orly as French pilots kick off World Cup strike

Paul Webster in Orly

PASSENGERS and ancillary staff at France's main domestic airport south of Paris yesterday joined the outcry against 3,800 Air France pilots who halted air traffic as they began a two-week strike likely to wreck travel plans for the football World Cup.

Only 12 of the 140 scheduled Air France flights from Orly departed yesterday, and there was no sympathy for the strikers, who object to a proposed \$50 million cut in their overall wage bill as a prelude to privatisation. Passengers pointed out that the pilots

were being offered share options in compensation.

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8 WORLD NEWS



A protester waits for former president P. W. Botha at court in George yesterday

PHOTOGRAPH: PETER ANDREWS

Botha knew of political killings, says spy chief

David Borensford in George

SOUTH AFRICA'S spy chief during the apartheid era confronted security force commanders with allegations that their men were murdering political opponents, it emerged yesterday at the trial of P. W. Botha.

The former president is charged with refusing to testify before the truth commission. The court also heard that F. W. de Klerk, the country's last white president, tried to end human rights abuses.

Mr Botha's case reopened in the magistrate's court in George, in the Cape province, where he has retired — with testimony which indicated that the former president knew about the killings.

The executive secretary of the truth commission, Paul van Zyl, told the court that the former head of the National Intelligence Service, Neil Barnard, revealed that he had confronted the heads of the police and military.



P. W. Botha in George yesterday after his trial restarted

Dr Barnard, giving evidence in camera, had told the commission that his agency became aware that policy figures were being murdered and that this was being approved by the state security council, which Mr Botha chaired.

"We were very upset and worried," Mr Van Zyl quoted Dr Barnard as saying. When Dr Barnard admitted he had no evidence, the police chief, General Johan van der Nerve, and the defence force commander, General Jamie Geldenhuys, said they would investigate.

He had also raised the issue with Mr Botha. "He said he was also very worried about it and he would deal with it at a political level," Dr Barnard was quoted as saying.

Mr Van Zyl said that shortly after Mr de Klerk came to power in 1993 the new president told the state security council to limit itself to "purely security issues".

There has been heated controversy over Mr de Klerk's responsibility for political violence after he succeeded to the presidency. He was, however, a member of the state

security council during his time as education minister. It is not clear whether Mr Botha will testify at his trial. His family are believed to be anxious to prevent him appearing.

A former head of the defence force, General Constand Viljoen — who was in George yesterday — said he had tried to halt the prosecution, but a deal had fallen through.

Mr Botha's court appearance coincided with fresh speculation about his love life. It is reported that he is planning to marry this month, at the age of 82. Local newspapers identified his new flame as Barbara Robertson, an Englishwoman 25 years his junior.

Mr Botha's wife, Elsie, died last year.

Meanwhile one of the apartheid's most notorious assassins, Ferdi Barnard, was found guilty on a string of charges, including the murder of an anthropologist, David Webster, and the attempted assassination of South Africa's current minister of justice, Dullah Omar.

Sodomy trial told of president's 'dancing lessons'

Alex Duval Smith in Harare

THE high court of Africa's most homophobic country squirmed through graphic accounts of homosexual sex yesterday as the former Zimbabwean president Canaan Banana sat in the dock, accused of sodomy and indecent assault.

On the first day of the trial of the 63-year-old Methodist minister, who was president from 1980 to 1987, a former aide-de-camp told of "dance lessons" at State House during which he was undressed and sexually assaulted.

"He offered me whisky, we played cards," Jeffa Dube, the prosecution's key witness, said. "He offered

anti-gay laws, he could be jailed for 10 years. The father of four, he pleads not guilty to all the charges.

The case arose from Dube's trial last year for murdering a colleague who had called him "Banana's wife". Afterwards the police received dozens of allegations of impropriety by the former president.

Among the 40 state witnesses are Vice-President Simon Muzenda, a presidential cook, an air force squad leader and a police chief inspector. Mr Banana is calling 10 witnesses in his defence, including his wife Janet.

The chief prosecutor, Augustine Chikumba, said that "taking advantage of his position", the former president had "coaxed a number of men into sexual activities of which they did not approve and which they resisted."

"On his overtures were spurned he would cause them to be penalised under the guise that they had committed acts of misconduct."

Dube, looking gaunt and swaying awkwardly as he recounted his ordeal, said he joined State House in December 1983 after Mr Banana, a keen football fan, had seen him play for the Black Mambas police team.

"I was called to the president's office. He wanted me to join his football club, the Tornados. I was told I would be promoted and would travel abroad," he said.

The day Dube joined State House, he was invited to dinner with the president. "After dinner we went back to his office. I had a whisky and soda. I was then asked to dance," he said.

"He told me to follow his instructions. He grabbed my waist and put my hand on his shoulder. His penis was erect. I felt his stubble against my face. I managed to remove myself and said I wanted to go home. I went to see my aunt and cried all the way," Dube said.

"Before I left, he patted my buttocks and said we would meet again. I cried because the person who had assaulted me was the president and I realised that I was now attached to him as an employee."

At his murder trial last year, Dube said the sexual abuse lasted three years and culminated in his being drugged and submitted to anal sex.

The case resumes today.

In the country with Africa's most stringent anti-gay laws, Banana faces 11 counts of sodomy and indecent assault

to teach me ballroom music and during the dance he was pressing his erect penis against me. He gave me a French kiss before I broke away from him."

Dube alleges that he was raped and forced into a homosexual relationship by Mr Banana in the 1980s.

Mr Banana, who faces evidence from nine other former bodyguards and presidential staff, is charged with 11 counts of sodomy and indecent assault. In the country with Africa's most stringent



Workers unload supplies for quake areas from a UN plane in Faizabad, northern Afghanistan

PHOTOGRAPH: MUZAMMIL PASHA

In the shaken land, they wonder why Allah is punishing them

Afghans remain unbroken by two terrible quakes, reports Claudia McElroy, one of the first journalists on the scene

AS THE afternoon sun fades, Latif Shah, aged 39, faces another night at the mercy of the elements. The farmer's modest clay house was among the 1,000 in Shar-e-Buzurg completely destroyed when last Saturday's massive earthquake hit this Afghan mountain wilderness.

Mr Shah, however, is trying to come to terms with a much bigger loss — that of his wife and young child.

"My family was at home when I was out working. I don't know why I was the one who survived. I have lost everything in the world," he said blankly. "We must leave everything in Allah's hands, but sometimes I wonder why He is punishing the people of this country so much."

The toll of suffering caused by the second major earthquake to hit northern Afghanistan in less than four months is hard to comprehend. Overlooked by the Pamir mountains, among the highest in the world, many villages in this remote and rugged terrain have been completely destroyed — if not by the earthquake itself, then by landslides.

In Shar-e-Buzurg district alone, 32 villages have been affected, according to the local authorities. Almost 50 more have not yet been visited. A further two districts, Chah Ab and Rostaq (the centre of last February's earthquake), have been largely devastated. Aid workers estimate that as many as 100 villages may have suffered, and up to 95,000 people may have been made homeless.

Despite the remoteness and inaccessibility of many of the affected areas, the response of international aid agencies has been swift. Two helicopters carrying medical supplies and other relief items from neighbouring Tajikistan arrived on Monday at the tiny airstrip at Faizabad, to be flown to outlying villages.

The International Red Cross and other agencies organised the logistical operations with military efficiency, while locals looked on from the nearby wreckage of buildings and rusted Soviet tanks, relics of another disastrous episode in Afghanistan's history. Painted white stones beyond the runway warned of the continuing danger of landmines.

"The scale of this disaster is massive, and we don't know the full extent of it yet," said Dr Mauricio Fernandez of the aid agency Médicins Sans Frontières. "Our main priority now is dealing with the medical emergency."

"Many people are probably still buried, although there will be few — if any — more survivors."

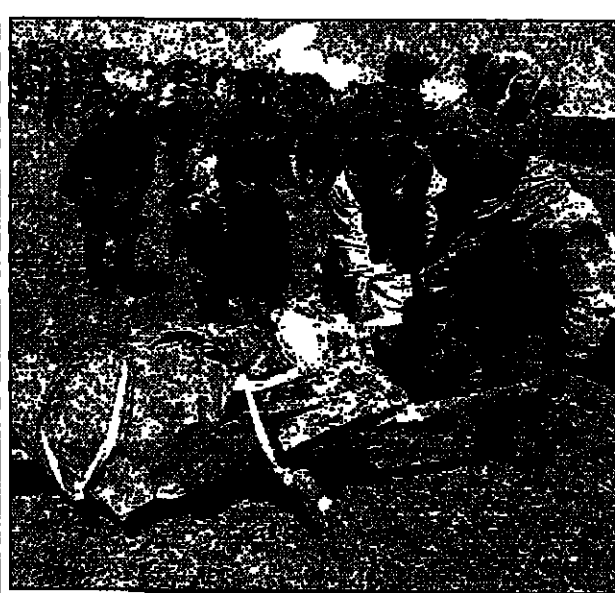
"Those who are wounded, mostly with fractures, will need medical treatment as soon as possible. Together with other agencies, such as Concern and the Red Cross, we have established clinics in three main centres. We also have a hospital for referrals in Rostaq, and there are about 80 people being treated there. The main problem is getting access to all the affected areas," he said.

"Since the weather is now much warmer, shelter is not the most urgent priority at this time."

Many Afghans were just beginning to recover from February's earthquake, rebuilding their homes and their livelihoods, when disaster struck for the second time. Many will not leave the area — partly because of the continuing violence in some areas of the war-torn country, and because this is the harvest season for the wheat, barley and rice many depend upon.

"This is my home and my land," said Mr Shah in Shar-e-Buzurg. "I have nowhere else to go. I will stay here and hope that God has better things in store for the future."

Regional pressures



Homeless villagers evacuate a victim PHOTOGRAPH: SAIED ISHAN

Experts rule out bomb tests

Rory Carroll

SEISMOLOGISTS dismissed claims yesterday that the earthquake which devastated northern Afghanistan could have been triggered by Pakistan's nuclear tests.

The scientific evidence pointed to natural causes and denied Afghanistan any grounds to seek compensation, they said.

Saturday's quake, which measured 6.9 on the Richter scale, killed 5,000 people, flattened entire villages, sliced mountains and triggered landslides. Two days earlier Pakistan detonated an underground nuclear device several hundred miles away.

The two incidents were unconnected, said David Booth, a seismologist at the British Geological Survey.

"It's just a coincidence. There is absolutely no evidence to say they were linked. That area of the world has very high seismicity. Large and shallow earthquakes in areas such as these are quite a regular occurrence," he said.

The underground detonation measured 4.7 on the Richter scale — making it 2,000 times less powerful than the quake, he said.

"There are 100 earthquakes every year measuring more than six on the scale," he said. "They don't bear any relation to nuclear tests."

Among those killed on Saturday were 140 schoolchildren in Rostaq, the site of the earthquake on February 4 which killed as many as 2,300 people and left 6,000 homeless.

Pakistani helicopters lifted tons of food, blankets, tents and plastic sheeting yesterday to Faizabad in Badakhshan, about 30 miles from the quake's epicentre in Shari Basurk.

Many of the latest victims were living in tents after losing their homes in the February quake.

WORLD COVER

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security council during a time as education minister. Both will testify in court. His family are believed to be anxious to prevent his appearing.

A former head of the Conservative General Election Campaign, who was in charge of the campaign to elect the Conservative government in 1979, he was the first to plan the prosecution of the Conservative Party's former leader, Margaret Thatcher, after she had been elected.

Mr. Botha's court appearance coincided with the publication of the book *The Black Cliff of the South*, which is reported to be a memoir of his life. It is reported that he was planning to marry a woman named Barbara, who was a friend of his, in 1987.

Mr. Botha's wife, Mrs. Botha, is believed to be in the United States.

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Country matters... Condy's writing had 'a scholarship so lightly and modestly worn, an attention so close as to become the purest celebration'

PHOTOGRAPH BY JEFF MORGAN

William Condy

Closely observed Wales

TWO evenings ago, on the last fine Sunday of a glorious May, I walked up to Clogwyn Du'r Arddu, the "black cliff" of the Snowdonia's northern flank. As the sun slanted beneath the cloud, sparkling on the lake and silvering the crags, I thought how peculiarly blessed I had been in having spent time here over the years in the company of William "Bill" Condy, the writer and Guardian country diarist, who has died aged 80.

Above me, an opportunistic raven was sneaking in to the nesting site of a pair of choughs in the old mine workings and suddenly the quiet cwm was alive with the parent birds' screams and aerobatics. So, lazing over coffee in the morning sun, I was promising myself that I would write to Bill and let him know that things were still thus, that the flowers he loved thrived and the choughs were still nesting on Snowdon. I would write to him because I owed to him my knowledge of these things. Then the phone rang and the Dyfed Elis-Gruffydd, the editor of both Bill's and my books at Gomer Press, the Welsh publisher for whom we have had an unreasoning and unwavering affection, telling me that Bill had died of kidney failure in Morriston hospital. And I went back and sat on my doorstep, and looked out across the sand-flats of Traeth Llan and the flocks of wading birds clustered along the shore, and wept quietly as the sense of the privilege of having known him and the loss overwhelmed me.

I first came to know of Bill, as would surely have been the case for those Guardian readers who looked forward to his Country Diary on alternate Saturdays, through his writings. His book on the Snowdonia National Park was published in 1966 as number 47 in Colman's series. As a young and ignorant rock-climber, newly settled for the sake of his sport in North Wales, I read it with enjoyment, and also with something more than that — a sense of discovery; an excitement at the grace of surprising perspectives on a

landscape I already knew well, a recognition of a rare quality of mind both questing and thoroughly in control of its material.

I wasn't then inclined to view it as a literary masterpiece. After all, it wasn't a drama, a novel or a poem; it was obviously a product of the imagination as they were. As my own acquaintance with literature broadened, and I read my Thoreau and Gilbert White, my Jeffries and Borrow, Pennant and Cobbett, my Matthiessen and Mabey and Lopez, that crass distinction broke down. I returned regularly over the years to Condy's plainy-titled volume, and it was with a deepening awareness of its achievement and its passion.

There is an easy charm of knowledge about it that derives from long years of intimate acquaintance and is expressed in concise and lucid terms. I've seldom come across so formidable a scholarship so lightly and modestly worn. There is an attention so close as to become the purest celebration. And there is a marvellous quality of thought and language too — the one, teasing and wry, challenging us always with the long perspective and our own frequent shallowness of response; the

other, possessed of a rhythmic economy that often seems to aspire to the state of poetry, and at times even begs to be read aloud. It's the best book ever written about one of the most beautiful regions on earth, and it's not dated at all in the more than 30 years since its first appearance.

The first contact I had with Bill came through editing an anthology of mountain literature. I wanted to include writing that gave a broader context than mere climbing, and I wrote to Bill for permission to include some of his. He protested mischievously at association with "that philistine tribe of despoilers", and continued to berate me for the next 15 years about my indulgence in so stupid a pastime — and he gave his consent.

Joy of the mountains and mist

William Condy's account of his search for the elusive purple saxifrage, typical of his perceptive writing, appeared as a Country Diary in the Guardian on February 11, 1995

MACHYNILETH: I missed the weather forecast on the radio last Sunday morning but someone told me later that if I had heard it, I certainly would not have gone to the hills. But go I did, for this is the time of my annual visit to Cader Idris in the hope of seeing the purple saxifrage beginning to flower. I have only once found it showing colour so early in the season but, encouraged by a wonderfully warm November followed by a December and a January that included a fair

pursued so modestly and humbly, without a trace of didacticism but always with a plea that I just look for myself, that its effect was imperceptible — and the more potent for being so.

As I suppose had been the case with Bill's own beginnings. He was born in the then leafy suburbs of south-west Birmingham (he retained that city's rounded speech-tunes throughout his long residence in Wales), and in his autobiography, *Wildlife, My Life* (Gomer Press, 1995), he tells of a childhood consumed by the love of a gentle nature all around him: "There were still ploughed fields out towards Tom Nocker's wood where lapwings, partridges and yellowhammers were making their last stand. In the abandoned garden of a once genteel country house, a former golf club, was full of grass-crested newts. On roadside tree-trunks in September, we sometimes found the large, spike-tailed caterpillars of the lime and poplar hawkmoths. Nothing thrilled my infant mind more."

Once there, I knew perfectly where I was, so often had I made this pilgrimage. There was the purple saxifrage in profusion, having clearly wintered very well so far. But now there was there yet a hint of purple. There were plenty of well-developed buds but all were resolutely closed. But I felt no disappointment. Though I had struggled so far up towering slopes and across, I had seen the purple saxifrage about to burst into spring. In early February, I do not ask any mountain to give me more than that.

Bill recalled him complaining bitterly at having to pay sumpence for a cup of tea in the refreshment hut on top because everywhere else it would have been a penny. He told me about the people on ponies, and the guide they saw in Dolgellau with "Guide to the grand and sublime beauties of Cader Idris" stitched in bold letters around his hat.

On our way up to Llyn y Gafr, Bill had introduced me to a cast of botanical characters who peopled the landscape for him: Price Evans, the pupil-teacher from the school at Upper Corris, who became a headmaster in the north of England and an acknowledged authority on the plants of Cader. He was sketched in with the rain-

drops bouncing off his bald skull, lying flat on his back having tripped, and continuing without a break his peroration on *woodsia alpina*, or giving out a hint, in a chance meeting with the most eminent geologist of the day, that the rocks he had been mapping can be traced by following the colonies of green spleenwort.

Bill talked of Mary Richards, of Caernarfon (whose biography, to be published by Gomer next month, he had finished just before his death) — what she didn't know about the flora of Meirionnydd and Africa not being worth knowing. And of W. H. Mappin, to whose kindness he owed the house on Ynys Hir nature reserve where he and his wife, Penny, lived.

There was the poet, R. S. Thomas, on holiday with Bill in Les Landes, under arrest for being in possession of a pair of binoculars near a French military base, unconcernedly raising them to gaze into a tree, murmuring "woodchat shrill" to himself to the bemusement of the arresting soldiers and ticking off on his list. All these and more characters he talked about with a shining affection for their foibles, their knowledge and their humanity.

Bill lived in Wales for 60 years — fitting, he always said, for someone born on St David's Day. He knew that jewelled country better than anyone ever has, and produced book after book in celebration of it. He'll live on there. People who engage with a landscape so intensely and lovingly as he did become a part of it, and in the minds of those whom they have taught to see are always present within it. That affable raven of yesterday, protesting that he was just taking a look — how Bill would have smiled, his spirit freed in the night. Or maybe it was another of his teases, first in a new guise...

Jim Perrin

William Martin Condy, countryman and writer, born March 1, 1918; died May 30, 1998

A celebration of the life of William Condy will be held at Y Tabernacl, Machynlleth, on Sunday, July 26 at 3pm

Phil Hartman

Funny voices of America

PHIL HARTMAN, the American comic actor and former member of the Saturday Night Live US television show, has died aged 49, shot dead at his Californian home by his wife, Brynn, after which she turned the gun on herself, according to police in Los Angeles. Although his career as an entertainer only took off 13 years ago, he was widely admired for his modesty and devotion to family life.

Phil Hartman (he later dropped the second 'n') was born in Canada but his family moved to Los Angeles when he was a teenager. He became popular at high school for his impersonations, but at that time did not consider a show-business career. Instead, he became a graphic artist, designing album covers for rock bands and devising the logo for the Crosby, Stills & Nash band.

In 1975, he joined the LA Groundlings, an improvisational troupe of actors in which he met the comedian Paul "Pee-wee Herman" Reubens. Hartman co-wrote Reubens's popular 1985 film *Pee-wee's Big Adventure* and appeared in it to good notices. The following year he joined Saturday Night Live and stayed with the satirical comedy show for eight years.

During that time he became widely known for his amusing impersonations of 70 people, including Ronald Reagan, Lyndon Johnson, Frank Sinatra, Jack Nicholson, John Wayne, Ted Kennedy and preacher Jimmy Swaggart. His greatest success was Bill Clinton, whom he satirised for his southern "sloppery". The president sent him a signed photograph saying he liked the mimicry — "mostly".

In 1990 Hartman began doing voices for the Simpsons television cartoon series, playing the incompetent lawyer Lionel Hutz and the actor Troy McClure; he was eventually heard on 49 episodes. By then, he had established a reputation for professionalism, but he never regarded himself as a proper actor; he felt he was neither cute nor

Christopher Reed

Philip Edward Hartman (Hartman), comic actor and impersonator, born September 24, 1948; died May 28, 1998



Hartman... versatile

Dennis Scuse

Radio waves

FOR more than 20 years after the war, German-based British soldiers relied on the radio request programme *Two-Way Family Favourites* — a partnership between the BBC Light Programme (now Radio 2) and the British Forces Network (BFN) — as a link with their loved ones back home. Its presenter in Germany in the early days was Dennis Scuse, who has died aged 78.

Scuse was one of that select group of broadcasters who, in the early days of the war, were sent to Germany to present the programme. He had served in army broadcasting in Africa and Italy. In 1949, he became BFN's assistant director in Germany, and between 1950 and 1957 he was director.

This was in many ways a crucial post. There was a substantial British presence in Germany, hungry for entertainment and news from home, and regional German radio stations were being set up with allied help to ensure a clean break from the Nazi state broadcasting system.

Resources were scarce, and the medium wave band so crowded that stations had to share wave-lengths. Scuse cooperated imaginatively with the Germans and Americans, moved BFN from Hamburg to Cologne, and in 1955 switched it to frequency modulation — making it the world's first English-speaking FM station. Scuse was an immensely tall man with great presence, an unexpected sense of humour, and considerable administrative talents. His best-known successor on *Two-Way Family Favourites*, Cliff Michelmore — who married Scuse's early co-presenter, Jean Metcalfe — remembers

Philip Purser

Dennis George Scuse, broadcaster, born May 19, 1921; died April 30, 1998

Death Notices

BARBARA KENNETH CHARLES FROUNDER with his first wife, Margaret, died 22nd May, 1998, aged 78, peacefully in hospital. He was born in 1919, was a member of the Royal Air Force, a proud grandfather and great-grandfather. A memorial service will be held at 11.30am on Thursday, June 4, at St. John's Church, 10, St. John's Road, Loughborough. Donations to the British Red Cross Society will be appreciated. The family will be grateful for any contributions to the service.

SARAH ELIZABETH BLOOMFIELD, nee Blackwell, psychoanalyst, author, born 28th May 1918, died 22nd May 1998, aged 79. She was a member of the Royal Society, a devoted mother and grandmother. A memorial service will be held at 11.30am on Thursday, June 4, at St. John's Church, 10, St. John's Road, Loughborough. Donations to the British Red Cross Society will be appreciated. The family will be grateful for any contributions to the service.

EDMUND, of Bromsgrove, Leics, 66, May 28, peacefully in hospital. He was born in 1931, was a member of the Royal Society, a devoted mother and grandmother. A memorial service will be held at 11.30am on Thursday, June 4, at St. John's Church, 10, St. John's Road, Loughborough. Donations to the British Red Cross Society will be appreciated. The family will be grateful for any contributions to the service.

Births

SHARON & DAVID NORTH (nee Smith), Hampshire, have a son, Alexander, born 21st May, 1998. A son and daughter, Alexander and Isabella, born 21st May, 1998. A son and daughter, Alexander and Isabella, born 21st May, 1998. A son and daughter, Alexander and Isabella, born 21st May, 1998.

Birthdays

DEVEREAUX, Annabel, is 21 today. Congratulations and love from Mum, Dad, Katie and James. Three out of four.

Marriages

DORIAN & LUCY. The wedding of Nick, younger son of Mr and Mrs D. Dorian, and Lucy, daughter of Mr and Mrs L. Dorian, took place on May 28th, 1998, in Loughborough. The ceremony was officiated by the Rev. Canon J. Dorian. The bride was attended by her bridesmaids, and the groom by his best man. The reception was held at the Loughborough Hotel. The couple will be married on June 1st, 1998.

A Country Diary

SOMERSET: Across the cattle-grid, along the track, across empty pastureland and past the substantial, four-square farmhouse, I sat in a dark cider-barn (still functional) and heard how the owner had lived on this farm for 61 years. His grandfather, a carter, died young of pneumonia, and the widow was given a shilling a week by the parish. His father, a blacked boot at the rectory one day a week in return for breakfast, left school at 13 to work on the land, and often enjoyed a trussed and cooked blackbird for his packed lunch. In time, he went to the war, and afterwards demonstrated his acquired countryman's skills and instinct for good hus-

bandry sufficiently to be granted the tenancy of a small county council holding under a scheme for ex-servicemen. In 1937, now with a young family — including Bertha, my informant — he heard that a larger, privately-owned farm nearby was to let. He cycled to Castle Cary and impressed the agent as a sound man to recommend to the owner, who offered a fair deal. So the family stepped up to Higher Farm, 140 acres, 35 cows, and a steady living to be made by their co-operative effort with one horse to do the mowing, harrowing and carting, and provide family transport on occasion. She would trot at a steady 13mph to Castle Cary. One, or sometimes

two, men were employed. The only paperwork involved cheque-book and paying-in book and the only representative of officialdom was the local policeman. Everything was done by hand — milking, pulling weeds, making hay, building sheaves and roofing ricks. The second war brought men with maps to decree that certain fields of choice pasture be ploughed for wheat. This was more than the horse could do. The ministry supplied an iron-wheeled tractor. Mechanisation, intensification, specialisation, quotas and regulation followed. Now there are no cows and the pasture is left for "grasskeeping" at falling prices.

JOHN VALLINS

Birthdays

Prof Heather Couper, astronomer, 45; Mark Elder, musical director, 51; Marvin Hamisch, composer, 54; Rt Rev Richard Barries, Bishop of Oxford, 62; Prof Dame Rosalyn Higgins, QC, international jurist, 61; Trevor Jesty, cricket umpire, 50; Stacy Keach, actor, 57; Gay Kinner, racehorse trainer, 68; Sonia Lawson, painter, 45; Prof Robin Orr, composer, 83; Carol Shields, novelist, 63; Johnny Speight, scriptwriter, 78; Craig Stadler, golfer, 45; Francesc Staniforth, textile designer, 41; Sir Sigmund Sternberg, financier, 77; Barbara Tate, president, Society of Women Artists, 71; Charlie Watts, drummer, 57; David Wheaton, tennis player, 39.

CORRECTIONS AND CLARIFICATIONS

IN OUR extracts from *Win-drush: The Irresistible Rise of Multi-Racial Britain*, published in the Guardian Week-end, May 16, pages 36-46, we said, quoting from the book, that Lenny Henry arrived in Britain as a child in the sixties. In fact, he was born in England — at Burton Road Hospital in Dudley. He went to work in a welding factory after leaving school, and got his break in show business via New Faces.

IN OUR obituary of Alan Milne, Page 20, May 29, we referred to several figures whose work had influenced him but got the names of three of them wrong. We should have said Leslie Stephen, [L T]

Hobhouse and Morris Ginsberg. Milne's father was referred to as a Fraserburgh businessman. That should have been Fraserburgh.

IN A report on page 7, May 25, headed, Culture secretary's book 'semi-literate', we described Winston Churchill as one of four 20th century prime ministers not to attend a university, and said the others were John Major, James Callaghan and Ramsey MacDonald. We omitted David Lloyd George, Andrew Bonar Law and Neville Chamberlain.

A CAPTION to a photograph illustrating a report on Page 26, May 28, said, "A tanker moves towards Sullom Voe in the Shetlands..." The vessel, the *Safir Lancia*, is a floating accommodation vessel (floater or floating hotel), not a tanker.

ON THE front of G2 yesterday, we promised "hundreds of pages" of [Media] jobs. We exaggerated. Sorry.

It is the policy of the Guardian to correct errors as soon as possible. Please quote date and page number. Readers may contact the office of the Readers' Editor by telephoning 0171 239 5258 between 11am and 5pm, Monday to Friday. Surface mail to Readers' Editor, The Guardian, 119, Farringdon Road, London EC1R 3ER. Fax: 0171 239 5997. E-mail: reader@guardian.co.uk

Diary

Matthew
Norman

THIS is terribly hard to believe, but according to the Sunday Times, civil servants are being bullied — reduced to tears even — by New Labour ministers. Harriet Harman, the intimidatingly bright Social Security secretary, is among the worst offenders, it seems, and apparently instructed officials to brief against a colleague of theirs to save face during a row about ministerial pay rises. This is shocking, but I think I can see what the problem might be. Mysteriously, Your Guide To Working With Harriet, the 10-page document leaked to us 18 months ago, has not made the transfer into government. "No, we've never heard of the guide here," confirms a DSS press officer. No wonder it's all gone wrong, then. Containing vital advice about everything from taking calls from Jack Dromey, Harriet's old man, to her pairing arrangements, this leaflet is indispensable. Unfortunately, we lost our copy long ago, but thanks to regressive hypnotherapy, much of it is being rescued from the memory banks for further serialisation. Tomorrow: Brewing and Pouring Harriet's Tea (And How to Put the Pot in the Dishwasher Without Chipping the Rim).

MOIVING far from bullying, we come to my old friend Alastair Campbell. Ali has been contacted by that prolific correspondent Brian Bethell, who suggests scrapping that outmoded song the Red Flag on conference platforms, and replacing it with something more fitting... the theme tune, in fact, from Thunderbirds. "Dear Brian," Ali replies. "I'm troubled how to respond, because I can't work out if you are being serious or if you are assuming you are. I'll get my Thunderbirds thinking hat on." We hope this titter gives him no ideas. Writing of servicing wealthy Riviera housewives is one thing; but let's keep Lady Penelope out of it, for God's sake.

THE appraisal of Malcolm Pearson, the Daily Telegraph's chief Jonathan Aitken panegyrist (if there is such a word) continues. Lord Pearson, you will remember, recently revealed that Jonathan Aitken lied about his Paris Ritz bill to protect his undercover work for MI6 — a story swiftly denied by Jonathan himself. Last week, in seeking to gauge his Lordship's reliability, we learnt how he was visited by an agent of God, the creator of mankind, during an operation on his varicose veins. Tomorrow, we will examine events surrounding his conviction for drink driving four years ago, and Lord Pearson's claims of a police conspiracy against him.

APOLOGIES to all who have written to claim champagne over the weekend, but the special one-off nonagenarian offer — a key part of the drive to rebrand the Diary as the column for the mature reader — closed last week. A special word of thanks, finally, to the person who wrote in from the Thomson Day Care centre in London. Making a mass application for 11 bottles — for three men and eight women — was a spirited attempt, and no one admireschutzpah more than us. Another time, perhaps.

STRIKE me pink (al-ready), Boris the Jackal Johnson has become a pantomime Jew after interviewing Rabbi Schumley Beach, author of the guide to "kosher sex", and a young man who might make something of himself one day should he ever shake off his crippling shyness. "He's been pictured with a glass of champagne. On a bed. Or vey!" wrote the Telegraph enforcer of Schumley. Oy vey! indeed, and a Hava Nagila to boot. "No, the Guv'nor ain't here, my dear," says a soft-spoken voice not unlike the late Ron Moody's when I call. "He's gone to Stamford Hill with the shikshah wife, to buy a Volvo. Then he's off to New York for lunch at the Carnegie Deli with Jackie Mason. Emus, he won't be back in the office until after shabbas." Would you have a mobile number for him? "Bubbla," says the voice, amusingly, "do I sound like a ravishing meshuggenah? Now sod off, my dear."



Our Bomb is sacred. Their Bomb's a disgrace. That's hypocrisy for you

Hugo
Young

NEW Labour was built on nuclear weapons. There were other foundations as well, but the Bomb was proof of virtue even earlier than One Member One Vote, and it had deep consequences. Excluding CND from the aura of the party required the abandonment of all discussion of Britain's nuclear policy. Even to mention this as a matter worth debating was to defile oneself. Hardly any Labour politician has done so for the past five years.

The tests by India and Pakistan, however, don't permit the silence to continue. For Britain was an accessory before the fact of them. Their happening engages Britain as a member of the nuclear club, but for a more particular reason too.

The argument India used for its five tests was, essentially, the same Britain has used since she went nuclear 50 years ago. The critical proponent in both cases was the need for status and apparent independence. "We will not accept an unequal system," said the ruling party, the BJP.

"This says we will do what we want to do," blurted Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee. Although the China threat came into the attendant dialectic, along with the doomed pre-emptive jump on Pakistan, the dancing in the Delhi streets celebrated national virility, and the illusion that the Bomb would make India more secure.

India's gambit carries dangers that are far from unimaginable. It wasn't new technically: we've known for 25 years that if a state could make a bomb, and so, with China's bootlegged help, could Pakistan. But the shameless testing heightens tension, sets a potent example, breaks a taboo that many other nuclear-capable countries — Argentina, Brazil, Iran, South Africa — have preserved.

Smashing through the elaborate construct of global treaties, India, followed by Pakistan, justifies itself by reference to the theory and practice of nuclear power. As a small power, Britain, in particular, is the model — and now, sermonising to the sub-continent, the hypocrite.

To this charge, Britain has some answers, but they're far from perfect. The Bomb is the real world nobody ever took seriously the pretence that Britain would use it on her own. Its value was as a ticket of entry, in certain arenas, to the top table.

This continues in the New Labour world. A vast theology has grown up around the British bomb, which will not be revised. The Trident submarine carry it all on, MoD war games seek the new enemies against whom it might be launched. The number of warheads Trident should carry remains a subject of debate, and will feature in the coming defence review. The admirals and the theologians live their lives immersed in the nuclear possibility.

In defence terms, however, it is fiction parading as unexamined fact. Status — the Indian obsession — is what continues to motivate most in Britain. Remaining a player in the Virtual War preserves the anachronism of our seat on the UN Security Council. The Bomb is a refuge from the

national decline so visible on other fronts since we got it. Its putative abandonment is therefore protected from any pressures for an ethical foreign policy. Could there be anything more ethical than reconfiguring defence policy so that this country forsakes the nuclear option, sets an example to the world, withdraws from India, Pakistan and other rogue states some of their plausibility, and destroys the illusion that these weapons could ever, in any case, be prudently used?

That dramatic gesture will not be made. On the other hand, nuclear power does impose responsibilities. Here, after all, is a new situation of tenuousness: two border powers, readying their fissile material, unrestrained by the decades of sophisticated dialogue that built a species of gruesome trust between the US and the USSR — which even then witnessed several catastrophic episodes when the world came close to trying in a nuclear accident. India and Pakistan are innocents at operating the deterrent doctrine of mutually assured destruction. But since they have failed to show restraint, the nuclear powers face their own neglected obligations towards disarmament.

THE Asians' recklessness is shocking, and their playing with the poverty of the people a savage disgrace. But it won't be undone. Meanwhile, nuclear disarmament has stalled. America and Russia have lost the energy to improve on a regime that will leave each of them with 3,500 warheads finely targeted on the other's cities in 2003, and maybe 2,500 in 2008. America, as the sole super-power, is proving especially dumb in her refusal to

start the process of disarming down towards a fraction of those figures, the maximum required to perform the virtual task that any war-game requires of them.

The enlightened response to India and Pakistan is no longer to bleat against them, but for the nuclear powers to dedicate themselves to a world free of nuclear weapons, abandoning the illusion that such weapons any longer prevent war, if they ever did. A mind-cracking task for the generals. But Mikhail Gorbachev proposed a 15-year target for that in 1986. To resuscitate it as something achievable by, say, 2020 would be a plausible international commitment, and the only way, as we may now see, to throttle nuclear proliferation.

Non-proliferation is currently pursued under an unequal treaty which legitimises the nuclear status of five states. The pledge would require Washington and Moscow to rise above the sloth of their politicians, and the demands of their military industries. But Britain, a prime agent provocateur in this matter, has her own opportunities, if watered-down ethics can be allowed to prevail. One of them is to cut to a minimum the new warheads carried on Trident. That might still mean almost 100, enough to destroy the world, but it is an available signal.

Mainly, however, we have the choice between activity and inertia: pushing the nuclear debate, or continuing to bury it by default. A strange disinterest infects the western attitude to the nuclear subcontinent. This is happening a long way away. In fact, it's the wake-up message which says the status quo worldwide is hideously unsustainable.

Throughout Europe the conservative response to politicians like Blair is to start opening its ranks to the right

Sleeping with Silvio

Martin Walker

BECAUSE these are grim times for the conservative parties of Europe, they are planning an act of such political desperation that it may result in a kind of suicide. They are about to embrace in their ranks the populist and highly controversial Forza Italia party of the media magnate Silvio Berlusconi.

At the insistence of Germany's Christian Democrats and Spain's conservatives and Britain's Tories, the Forza Italia movement is to be formally welcomed into the European Peoples' Party on June 9.

Five days later, on the eve of the European summit in Cardiff, Britain's William Hague will set aside his Euro-scepticism to join the other EU conservative party leaders at a special political

summit, at which Mr Berlusconi will be enfolded into the embrace of Europe's respectable right.

The price to be paid for this could be high. Belgian, Dutch and Italian Christian Democrats have all fought the move desperately, only to be overwhelmed by the big battalions of the British, Germans and Spaniards. The Italians were told bluntly that their reading of the EPP constitution was wrong: they did not have — as everyone had hitherto assumed — the right to veto new political parties from their own country joining the new alliance of the right.

There are several motives for this. One is the conservative envy at the way Tony Blair has breathed new life into the European socialist movement, developing close personal ties with the Dutch and Swedish prime ministers and openly looking forward to seeing the German social democrat Gerhard Schröder replace Helmut Kohl in the September elections.

Another reason is that the voting strength of the EPP in the European Parliament will instantly swell from 180 to 204. Not enough yet to challenge the grip of the

left, but the enlarged EPP is then hoping that next year's European Parliament elections will see enough losses of Labour MEPs in Britain to let them become the biggest political group in a parliament whose powers will sharply increase now that

the Amsterdam treaty has been ratified.

The deeper motive is that the right is in crisis across Europe. Their grand champion, Helmut Kohl, is threatened with the end of his 16-year reign in the elections this September. Their most durable ruling party, the Dutch conservatives who were in power solidly from 1918 until four years ago, have just been defeated yet again.

The right was tossed out of power in last year's French elections, and was humiliated earlier this year by the strong showing of the National Front in the municipal elections.

The traditional respectable right are feeling squeezed on the right by dubious and populist groups, who are winning votes on anti-immigrant platforms. They are squeezed in the centre by the way that nominally socialist politicians like

Tony Blair and Holland's Wim Kok and Sweden's Goran Persson are following the Bill Clinton model and embracing free market economics and welfare reform. The conservative response is to start opening its ranks to the right.

"The Christian Democrats show no shame anymore in cooperating with rightist movements," sneered Germany's Claudia Roth, president of the Green group in Europe's parliament. "They should think twice about whether they really want to open their doors for the allies of Italy's post-fascists."

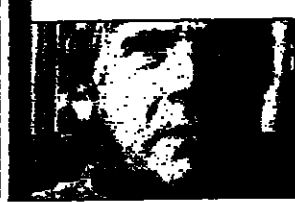
The first fruit of the new alliance on the right came last week, in that extraordinary vote when the European Parliament rejected a bland motion which praised Tony Blair's stewardship of the UK Presidency of the EU Council. Berlusconi's votes

provided the right's margin of victory. The Forza Italia MEPs said they had been persuaded to vote the resolution down because the section on employment policy was too "leftist".

The irony is that while the right may be huddling together for fear that they are losing the political battles, they appear to have won the wider war. The massive programme of budget restraint to qualify for the single currency has amounted to a kind of Europe-wide Thatcherism by the back door.

Tony Blair and his European siblings now embrace a fiscal rigour and free market ideology that sometimes puts them to the right of Helmut Kohl. So the conservatives collectively delude themselves that their salvation lies in abandoning the political centre and embracing the wilder shores of the right.

Mystery of Officer XX

Paul
Foot

WHAT a commotion followed my mild reflections a fortnight ago about the Stephen Lawrence Inquiry! On the day my column was published, counsel to the inquiry Edmund Lawson QC rose to make a portentous statement. He was angry about what he called "an unfounded complaint". I'm not going to argue with Mr Lawson about what is founded and what isn't. I was merely pointing out that material which might be relevant to the inquiry was not being disclosed. I was surprised in particular by the deletion of names of young men in a car which passed by the murder scene soon after Stephen Lawrence was stabbed, especially since the young men had been involved in the racist murder of Rolan Adams in 1991. No thanks to the inquiry team, this deletion was uncovered and the names disclosed. I was also worried about the reluctance to disclose information about the notorious criminal Clifford Norris, whose son was one of the original suspects for the Lawrence murder — suspects whom the police took an unconscionable time to arrest apparently because the senior policeman involved didn't realise after a lifetime arresting people in South London that he could make arrests on suspicion. I am delighted to see that this matter too is now being addressed. The day after my article appeared the inquiry adjourned for two days to discuss the disclosure of police intelligence documents on Norris. I was also interested to hear that some of the regular journalists covering the inquiry objected to leaving the room when ordered to do so — in protest at the secrecy of the lawyers' discussions about disclosure. I feel bound to report, moreover, that a leaflet has been circulating in the inquiry room by "the people of the public gallery" demanding more openness.

I AM glad to report Mr Lawson's firm commitment that "if anything should come to our notice to suggest that there was any connection between Clifford Norris and any police officer, we would procure [sic] that that information was disclosed. Thus far it has not come to our notice, despite our looking at a great many documents, but if it did it would be disclosed". Now that a link between Norris and a flying squad officer has come to light, we can obviously look forward to a full public examination of it. Unhappily, the inquiry has directed that the officer should be known as XX (two

letters are now necessary because the inquiry has already run through a whole alphabet of pseudonyms).

A crucial aim of these inquiries is to solicit information from the public. How can anyone be expected to come forward with information about Officer XX?

FIRST OUT of the trap with support for the government's minimum wage figure of £2.60 an hour was Sir Colin Marshall, chairman of British Airways and the Confederation of British Industry. Sir Colin is supremely well qualified to assess the £2.60 figure.

Assuming he works a 10-hour day and a five-day week, his directorship alone brings him in £2.60 a minute. Obviously he can't be expected to survive on that, so he tops it up with the usual ridiculous share options.

Sir Colin is a founder member of the MuttonBalls Club, New Labour's fat cats. On April 28 he was guest of honour at a British-American Chamber of Commerce dinner at the Park Lane Hotel. The guest speaker was the Chancellor of the Exchequer. I gather the menu included Brown Soup, Roast Ayrshire Ducks, garnished with mashed onions, Spotted Dilly Trick and Mono Poly Pudding — all washed down with vintage Cabot's '97. After dinner, there was a jolly game of Hunt the Scrounger. The winner was the first to reveal to find a hotel worker who earns in a week what Sir Colin Marshall "earned" while scoffing his dinner.

FOR MOST of the 1990s, Labour Party supporters fought a heroic rearguard action against successive Tory party education Ministers' attempts to force state schools out of democratic control. "Opening out" they called it. "Grant-maintained"

How can anyone come forward with information about this policeman?

schools were "liberated" from "local bureaucracy" (elected councils). Head teachers were encouraged to behave like business bosses, and to treat other schools in their areas like competitors in the market. Taking their lead from Labour's education experts — notably an ambitious new MP from the North East, Stephen Byers — Labour supporters argued that this policy was wasteful and invidious, and above all fatal to the interdependence between comprehensive schools which is so vital to a thriving state education system. Such campaigners proved remarkably successful. What are these people to make of a new Government paper, written in the usual glibly Blairite prose by the aforementioned

Stephen Byers, New Labour's minister for school standards, which concedes every single point made by his detested Tory predecessors?



The best way

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Picking the right team

Next step: find a project

THERE was only room for 22 in the squad, so the boss had to choose carefully. Of course he wanted a blend of youth and experience, doughty veterans at the back, sparkling performers attacking up front. That meant dropping those who were off form and out of condition — controversial perhaps, but William Hague did what he had to.

Unlike Glenn Hoddle, the Conservative leader managed to pack a few laughs into the team selection he announced yesterday. Who can resist the delicious prospect of Ann Widdecombe sharing the shadow cabinet table with her former boss at the Home Office, Michael Howard — of whom she famously detected "something of the odd couple"; now these two members of British politics' Addams Family will be colleagues once more. Equally amusing is Mr Hague's heralding of "new talented faces": enter Sir Norman Fowler as shadow home secretary, Cecil Parkinson as caretaker chairman till October and Michael Ancram as his designated successor. To be fair, Mr Hague has made good his promise to infuse fresh blood into the Tory body politic. And yet the most likely reaction to the elevation of Gary Streeter, Peter Ainsworth and Liam Fox will be: who they?

Nevertheless, in equal contrast with Mr Hoddle, Mr Hague is not looking for instant success from his new line-up — or at least he shouldn't be. He is embarked on a long haul, one that's unlikely to yield results much before the next election. For now the

minimum task is to keep his party together and to fire accurate, oppositional darts at the Government. Yesterday's reshuffle should help make that possible.

Mr Hague has sought unity by picking colleagues in his own image, located on the pragmatic centre-right. Those who are not theologically Euro-sceptic are at least Euro-wary: that should prevent the fatal divisions over Europe that did so much damage to John Major. Indeed, it's a testament to how much times have changed in today's Conservative Party that the old calculations — weighing up which of the warring camps on Europe had prospered — seemed rather irrelevant yesterday. There might be a slight tilt rightward — with Mr Streeter the only backer of Kenneth Clarke in the entire pack — but the Major era's talk of "bastards" and the like has vanished. The Parliamentary Conservative Party is too small and its deliberations too marginal for such splits to matter these days.

Mr Hague's other objective — to assemble a force more capable of attack on the Government — has also come closer with yesterday's selections. Ms Widdecombe has proved a ferocious performer in the Commons, rattling Tony Blair during Question Time and railing against most of her fellow Tories in support of anti-faunting bills. She should be a formidable tormentor of Frank Dobson at health. Francis Maude is quieter and more fornic than Ms Widdecombe, but is bound to outperform his querulous predecessor as shadow chancellor, Peter Lilley. David "Two Brains" Willetts adds a bit of cerebral firepower to the Tory war-machine.

All this will help in the immediate business of opposition, at which Mr Hague's party has performed feebly. But the larger, task remains. The Conservatives have to do what Labour did after its successive elec-

tion defeats: return to first principles and construct a body of ideas that could serve as a new political project. The appointment of Mr Lilley as deputy leader and unofficial "minister for thought" might be a step on the way. But it is too large a burden for one man: the entire right-wing of British politics will have to share in the task.

Free speech? Urgent repairs needed

THIS past few months has seen a troupe of distinguished American lawyers and journalists flying to London to help us sort out the mess we have got into with the laws affecting freedom of expression. They already knew our laws were bad: American courts have been reluctant to enforce English libel judgments since a 1982 judgment which found that our laws were "antipathetical to the protection afforded the press by the US Constitution". Even so, the Americans have been gawped in disbelief at the finer points of domestic contempt, defamation, harassment and data protection legislation have been explained to them. They have marvelled at the lack of constitutional protection for free speech. They have flown back home shaking their heads at the quiescence of the British journalistic establishment over a sorry state of affairs.

This benign interest in our laws is not purely altruistic. American publishers and editors have become increasingly alarmed at the trend for "forum shopping" whereby London has become the favoured capital of the world for anyone thinking of pursuing a libel case. In London there is no First Amendment. The burden of proof is on the publication, not the plaintiff. Rich litigants can dispose of juries if they think they will

do better without them. And, perhaps most crucially of all, there is virtually no protection for newspapers which publish material which can legitimately be shown to be in the public interest — loosely, the concept of qualified privilege. The famous 1984 judgment of *Sullivan vs New York Times* protected newspapers which could show that they were writing about matters about which the public deserved to know, providing the plaintiff could not demonstrate malice. It is a judgment which, in one form or another, has been adopted in most enlightened democracies. Only England has remained a Sullivan-free zone.

That is why an Appeal Court case starting today before the Lord Chief Justice, Lord Bingham, is so crucially important. The case is an appeal from the 1996 libel trial in which the former Irish Taoiseach, Albert Reynolds, won 1p libel damages from the Sunday Times over a story headlined: "Goodbye Gombeen man. Why a fib too far proved fatal." At its heart lies the ability of newspapers and broadcasters freely, robustly and fairly to report on people in public life without the fear of being sued. There can be few issues more central to the health of a democracy. A ruling which extended the reach of qualified privilege in this country would not sweep away all the iniquities of the English libel law, but it would be a powerful signal to the rest of the world that our judges have begun to recognise that we have a problem.

Gazzaless future Fitness is vital in Hoddle squad

GLENN HODDLE'S espousal of youth in soccer rather than genius in decline was backed by most opinion polls yesterday but

England's manager knows full well that his decision to dump Paul Gascoigne will stand or fall on England's performance on the field. His departure is as much a commentary on what has been happening to football in recent years as on Gazza himself. The pace of the game is now so great it demands athleticism of the highest order. No longer — except in its dreams — can the nation wait until our faded, unfit hero steps out of Boy's Own magazine to score the goal that brings the World Cup back home. It is seductive to argue the case for including him in the squad as a morale-boosting, wild card even if he is unlikely to play, or of hoping that his experience will unexpectedly produce a moment of magic.

But in the calculus of probability, the English manager has done the only thing he could do after showing quite extraordinary patience with the wayward talent under his guardianship. England has under one of the great of the world's population and has no Divine Right to succeed in the most fiercely contested team event in the world (even though football has turned out to be one of our most successful exports). This contest will be decided by skill, fitness, determination, leadership and luck (Hand-of-God or whatever).

Hoddle has to believe that every member of his talented — but not yet earth-shattering — squad is capable of going the full potential distance: seven exhausting games of 90 minutes each. In this context Gazza's departure has a predictably tragic quality about it, a demigod brought down by flaws in his character. Hoddle said that after he had informed Gazza and the others who had been dropped, he went into the next room and saw television pictures of the earthquake in Afghanistan which, he said, put everything into perspective. If only it would.

Letters to the Editor

Trailers and aural pollution

I WONDER if Catherine Bennett (Trailer trash, May 30) has considered how the timing of Radio 4's risible "trailers" coincides quite neatly with those on BBC TV and "real" adverts on commercial TV. What a handy way to get one's ears used to the sound of commercials on Radio 4 might not even notice! Still, only the most paranoid of listeners would consider such a thing. Wouldn't they?

M A McAnislan, Blandford, Dorset

THE recent visit by the Japanese emperor to Cardiff Castle proved somewhat embarrassing. At the exact moment that the Emperor's entourage was leaving the protesting POWs at Cardiff Castle, the colonel in charge ordered the old soldiers to about-turn. Unfortunately, he failed to notice that the soldiers already had their backs to the emperor. Faced with the old enemy, the POWs did not know which way to turn.

Adrian Jarvis, Manchester

I READ with interest Laura Thompson's article claiming that "women and sport" is no longer an issue since the doors have been opened to "the ladies" over the last decade (Better to leave the babes in the woodwork, May 26). She nearly had me convinced until I noticed that her piece sat in splendid isolation amongst four pages devoted almost entirely to men's sport (football, golf, cricket, rugby league) written by 11 male reviewers.

Wendy Owen, Little Neston, South Wirral

YOU report that this year has seen "a renaissance in the popularity of classical music" and list a "classical top 10" (June 1). This list includes Titanic — James Horner; Paul McCartney's Standing Stone; Songs of Sanctuary — Adiemus and Salva Nos — Medieval Babes. Since these are all examples of blatant 20th century pastiche, I wonder who decided to stretch the meaning of "classical" to hitherto unknown limits?

Michael Rutton, London

I HAVE a 1994 Webster's New International Dictionary which says that "jeune" means "empty" or "void of substance" or "void of interest or satisfaction" (Letters, May 29). Also, it says that jeunism is not derived from jeunism, but both are derived from the Latin jejunum meaning empty or dry. It goes on to say that jeunism is the middle division of the small intestine and is so called because it was formerly supposed to be empty on death.

Tony Kirkland, Edinburgh

We do not publish letters where only an e-mail address or a truncated address is supplied; please include a full postal address. We may edit letters; shorter ones are more likely to appear.

What next: Crying Spice?

GLENN HODDLE's decision to eliminate Gateshead-born Paul Gascoigne from his World Cup squad can only be described as pure madness (Gascoigne bites the dust, June 1). Without the Georgie genius and his irrepressible magic, Hoddle has removed the one glimmer of hope from this all-round average side. Gascoigne's off-field antics, fighting of the tab and frequent injury problems have caused a great deal of concern for the fans as well as the trail of managers he has left in his stride over the last 15 years: seven father figures, Walter Smith and Terry Venables, admitted total frustration at times. These weaknesses aside, the Middlebrough star's genius on the pitch cannot be denied. Without his input, success on the international stage becomes all the more unlikely.

Gascoigne's vision, focus and skill are unquestionable. His presence on the bench is vital if a disastrous game is to be sufficiently revived. He may not be the most suitable role model, but he is certainly one of the best forwards Brit-

ain has ever seen — arguably the best since the demise of Besty and Sir Bobby.

Glenn Hoddle's lack of judgment may well be the final nail in England's coffin. Julia Hamilton, Tyne & Wear

THE two defining news stories of the weekend — Geri and Gazza's exclusions from their respective "teams" — have one thing in common: Chris Evans. Gazza's recent kebabs and beer binge, and speculation that Geri is being offered a job at Ginger Productions, lead us to wonder whether Evans has a hand in the demise of the popular cultures he claims to represent? Steven Cummings, Peter Beauman, Glasgow

WHEN I opened my Guardian, I thought the Sun had been delivered by mistake. I hardly consider "Gazza gets the boot" and "Ginger quits the Spice Girls" to be a compelling read over my breakfast table.

Hugh Gennell, Leicester

POP culture has always been sneered at by so-called intellectuals but at least the Spice Girls don't need a Lottery grant so that lots of over-dressed and over-feminine "music lovers" can go and hear them perform at Covent Garden.

Drew Gray, Abington, Northampton

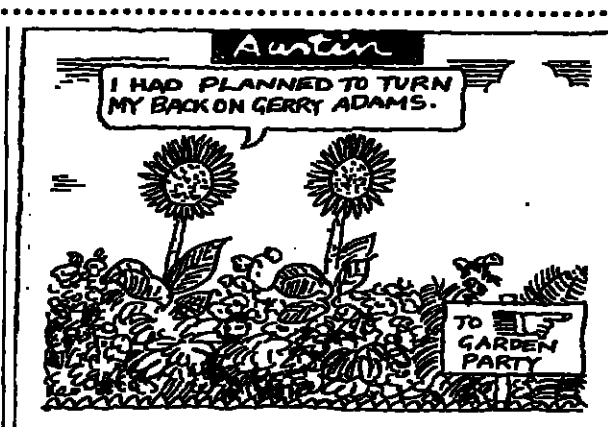
SO THE team is expected to conquer the world without the talents of the overweight one whose brilliant but erratic performances have given us so much in recent years? I'm gutted — Geri was always my favourite Spice Girl.

Jed Hardy, London

GOODBYE Ginger Spice, hello Gazza Spice? Christopher Pontac, London

OR maybe Crying Spice? Martin W Smith, Wirral, Merseyside

The Country Diary is on Page 16



Making the office work for parents

WELL done Decca Aitkenhead (Women aren't the only ones who are over-worked. Everybody is, May 29). It is time we opened up the discussion to enable men to take more part in family activities. This would not only enrich their lives but take some of the burden off women.

Many men do want to escape from the long-hours syndrome but feel unable to demand job sharing, reduced hours and employment breaks in the way that women do. Women have been able to use the sex discrimination laws to obtain flexible arrangements after having children. Men generally cannot do this. A law allowing anyone to work part-time if they so choose is needed. Introducing parental leave on a paid basis would be another incentive. It might even be possible to share around some of the long hours worked to benefit the unemployed.

Margaret O'Brien, London

DECCA Aitkenhead put her finger on the spot when she asked: "How is it that news of a working parent resigning to spend time with the family is a women's issue?" I'd guess that in nine out of 10 cases, it's the mother who searches for a childminder and plans ahead to put their child's name on a nursery waiting list. Men don't worry about installing CCTV to assess the carer's qualities because their part-

ner's sixth sense is already working overtime.

Charlotte Pearson, London

WHAT a disappointment — another article about working mothers where all the women interviewed talk about "choosing" to work full-time or not at all (Father Time and mother courage, May 28). I would have loved to take six months' maternity leave when my daughter was born, but I simply couldn't afford to take the 76 per cent pay cut once I'd used up my statutory 13 weeks — and I work for the civil service, whose maternity arrangements are more generous than many.

My only "choice", other than returning to work full-time, was to throw myself on the mercy of the benefits system, probably being forced to leave my children's father, who takes home enough to make it not worth his while becoming a house-husband but not enough to support us all, even if I took a night job stacking shelves in Tesco, like one of your interviewees. Name and address supplied.

THIRTY years ago, I worked a 35-hour week. Now I work at least 50 hours a week, often more, and my standard of living is not appreciably better. (Of course, I'm lucky to have a job at my age.)

L R Armstrong, Portsmouth

Mr Smith doesn't go to Halifax to put his bum on a seat

AS A LABOUR voter and practising artist I was bemused and annoyed by Chris Smith's defence of his book and attitude to the arts (As T S Eliot said, May 28). Once again we are treated to his disturbingly one-sided view of how the arts (and which of the arts) are good for you.

He needs to look much more closely at creating access to the arts by doing — real people making art they can relate to and own — rather than offering tantalising glimpses of the "high arts" via one-off cheap ticket schemes.

The clear message which rings through is that, far from wanting to create access to the arts, he wants to put bums on seats for reasons economic. The "enriching experiences" he cites (art, music and traditional theatre) are only a small part of the way lives need to be touched to create an awareness of the powers of the arts.

Perhaps he should sit down with the Education Secretary and look at how Labour poli-

cies are affecting the arts in schools. If the government continues to under-estimate the enriching experiences offered by the arts in schools, where will audiences and performers of the future come from?

Chris Smith was due to attend a performance by 30 schoolchildren in Halifax recently. Their composition, Metamorphosis, had been created in three days of workshops with myself. Their sense of pride in this 20-minute music-theatre piece was almost palpable. Mr Smith cancelled his visit at the last minute. Not high enough for you, Chris?

Barry Russell, Artist-in-Residence, Bretton Hall, Wakefield

AH, Chris Smith has engaged Bel Littlejohn as his ghost writer. We saw it here first. Elizabeth Cockerell, Ely, Cambs.

Book sales get a poor review

THE really offensive part of Ian Mayes's defence of special offers for review books (Selling under review, May 30) is his justification of the practice as a service to readers. As if readers might otherwise have difficulty in obtaining the books through the normal channels, is the thousands of eager, existing booksellers in the market place.

Please let us stick to the commercial justification. After all, why shouldn't a newspaper make money from selling review books as long as it is strictly independent of the reviews? No reason at all on the face of it.

The trouble is that while the two activities are carried on side by side, one can never be sure that no influence is being brought to bear. At the moment, when the commercial

value is relatively small and management is scrupulous, the risk is admittedly negligible. But suppose the revenue from book sales becomes significant, and a later management less nice, the existence of separate organisations for the two activities will be no protection.

Influence can be exercised very effectively in subtle and untraceable ways. A nod is as good as a wink, and much much better than a memo. The only way that readers can be sure that reviews are completely independent is for the newspaper to forego sales of the books concerned.

But as a bookseller myself, I would say that, wouldn't I? Jeremy Faint, The Wadebridge Bookshop, Wadebridge, Cornwall

First names

WELCOMING and naming a child is for most families an important social ritual which, depending on the beliefs of the parents, may or may not have some religious significance. Certainly, humanist welcoming ceremonies for "new arrivals" have taken place for some time now, long before the advent of the Baby Naming Society, whose approach Matthew Fort correctly represents as "a typical lump ludge".

And what if a child isn't just for Christmas, May 30? Non-believing parents have found them both appropriate and meaningful. And humanist "mentors" have long been around to take the place of godparents.

Nigel Collins, British Humanist Association, London

The best way to stop the growth of nuclear arms is to get rid of our own

SINCE Roy Hattersley purports to enlighten our readers on the meaning of "something called the Simla Agreement" (Endpiece, June 1), it is a pity he doesn't make a better effort to tell them what it is. It was an agreement voluntarily signed by the leaders of India and Pakistan after the third war of aggression launched by Pakistan against India since independence in 1947. Considering the comparative strength of the two countries at that precise moment, it was a generous settlement on India's side and the commitment to ensure that the future of Kashmir was settled through bilateral talks a reasonable one. Hattersley writes mysteriously that "this view is held with various degrees of sincerity in New Delhi". He would find it difficult to discover anyone in Delhi who disagrees.

The nuclear tests unleashed by the two countries in recent weeks are a tragedy for them both, but hardly less so for the world at large. On all previous occasions when India has made a move towards nuclear status, her leaders have proposed at the same time practical, far-reaching proposals for worldwide disarmament of all nuclear arsenals. The most famous of these — as well known at least as the Simla Agreement — was the Delhi Declaration signed by Rajiv Gandhi and Mikhail Gorbachev in 1986. That is the right approach to stop the present madness and start the solution of other problems of the subcontinent, including Kashmir.

Perhaps I might use this occasion to mention that I am writing a book on the subject to be called Dr Strangelove, I Presume. I fear my title may have been pre-empted by the

moral still stands. Anyhow, I hope I will finish it in time to stop Roy writing further nonsense on this topic. On several other matters I would be happy to accompany him on a deputation to Downing Street.

Michael Foot, London

IT WOULD be a tragedy if the G8 summit in London on June 12 was used only to pour condemnation on India and Pakistan. The only effective response of the West is to make a start on ridding the world of the piles of nuclear arms that are no longer needed. Britain has a unique opportunity to change world history, through its presidency of the EU, its position in G8 and the presence of a foreign secretary and a government committed to multilateral disarmament.

Dr Chris Moss, London

THE US AMBASSADOR to the UN, Bill Richardson, was in India just days before the nuclear testing on May 11, apparently raising any clue of what was about to occur, in what the CIA stated was an intelligence black spot. Meanwhile, the UN weapons inspectors continue to run around Iraq searching sites which have included a crèche, an orphanage, Catholic convents and churches. When Iraqi authorities discussed the invasion of Kuwait with the then US Ambassador, April Glaspi, her reply (July 25, 1990) was reported as: "We have no opinion on Arab-Arab conflicts like your border disagreement with Kuwait." The subsequent devastation and ongoing sanctions are history.

It would be depressing, given the apparently all-embracing knowledge of the CIA and international security ser-

vices, if Ambassador Richardson was subsequently accused of a parallel conversation with India. However, perhaps the UN weapons inspectors would be more glibly employed in India and Pakistan.

Felicity Arbuthnot, London

A CONNECTION must be made — and investigated — between the Indian and Pakistani nuclear tests and the devastating earthquake in Afghanistan soon after. Dr Michael Aitcha, Programme director, UNCT (retired), London

INTERESTING to read France's condemnation of nuclear tests, bearing in mind events at Mururoa Atoll not so long ago. Alison Warwick, Plymouth

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Finance Guardian

Deal a day for Wheat Belt's corn merchant



Combine harvesters... The march of gene technology from the lab to the Kansas plains with pesticide-resistant seed is both profitable and controversial

PHOTOGRAPH: MONTY DAVIS

Monsanto merger creates a life-sciences monster

Mark Tran in New York

THE rapid consolidation of the global drugs and chemicals industry quickened yesterday when Monsanto, the huge life-sciences corporation, agreed to merge with American Home Products, the pharmaceuticals group left jilted at the altar by the UK's SmithKline Beecham earlier this year.

The deal, effectively a reverse takeover of AHP by Monsanto, ranks as the sixth largest in American corporate history.

It is designed to give the merged combine — which will have a market value of \$96 billion — a commanding position in the life-sciences industry, which applies biotechnology to agriculture and health, most controversially in the production of genetically modified foodstuffs.

Monsanto, best known for artificial sweetener Nutra-sweet, began talks with AHP after the latter was abandoned by SmithKline Beecham, the pharmaceuticals manufacturer which then turned to Glaxo for merger negotiations, again abortive.

The new group yesterday pledged to invest \$2.5 billion

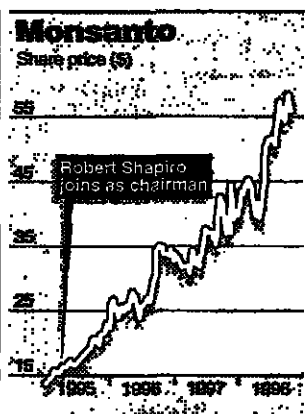
of its \$23 billion-a-year revenue in research and development in the quest to discover a new wonder product.

Robert Shapiro, Monsanto boss, and Jack Stafford of AHP will lead the new corporation.

Savings from the merger are expected to be between \$1.2 billion and \$1.5 billion a year, but Mr Stafford said: "This new company is based on growth and opportunity. We're committed to cutting-edge science, to developing and marketing great products and to a philosophy of growth and value."

The merger follows a flurry of deals in the pharmaceuticals sector as companies pool their R&D efforts. Novartis, one of the world's largest pharmaceutical companies, was created in 1996 as a result of the merger of Sandoz and Ciba-Geigy. AHP held talks in January with SmithKline Beecham on a merger that would have created the world's largest prescription drug company.

Monsanto, based in St Louis, Missouri, has been an aggressive deal-maker under Mr Shapiro, who has been called a "deal-a-day" man. Last month the company bought the remaining 60 per cent of DeKalb Genetics Corporation, a seed corn com-



pany, for some \$2.3 billion, and announced plans to buy Delta & Pine Land, a leading producer of cotton seed.

Monsanto requires large amounts of cash for its \$2 billion CD Searle drugs division. GD Searle has a full pipeline of products ready to hit the market and competes against companies many times its size and resources.

Because it is up against much larger rivals, Monsanto has been interested in teaming up with an ally and held talks with DuPont before deciding on AHP, which is spending \$1 billion on a biotechnology research programme. Even that is sub-

stantially less than most major competitors. Novartis spent \$1.9 billion on R&D in 1997, while Glaxo Wellcome spent \$1.8 billion.

AHP's drug-making division, Wyeth-Ayerst Laboratories, was founded in 1860 when John and Frank Wyeth opened a drugstore in Philadelphia. The group expanded into other related industries until 1996 when it sold 80 per cent of its food services division for \$1.2 billion to concentrate solely on its pharmaceutical business.

But despite a wide product range — AHP manufactures products such as Advil, a painkiller, Robitussin cough syrup and Centrum vitamins — it has a recent history of product mishaps.

It faces thousands of lawsuits from women who began using the Norplant contraceptive device in 1996 and then complained that the company failed adequately to warn of side-effects such as depression and ovarian cysts.

More recently, legal action has been threatened over the reported side-effects of a slimming product which was withdrawn from the market last autumn. That could result in liabilities of up to \$4 billion, but AHP is said to have product liability insurance cover of only \$1 billion.

Profile: Monsanto

MONSANTO'S work on genetically modified plants has caused controversy about whether pesticide-resistant genes could "leak" to other plants or whether genetically modified crops might produce unexpected results.

When Robert Shapiro took over as chairman and chief executive three years ago, Monsanto spanned chemicals, pharmaceuticals, agricultural products and food ingredients. The share price languished just above \$10.

He made it a highly focused life sciences group looking to play a key role in applying gene technology to agriculture. The share price has soared.

The chemicals business, spun off under the Solutia banner has gone, replaced by seed production and distribution companies. Last month Monsanto bought 60 per cent of DeKalb Genetics and cotton seed producer Delta & Pine Land, taking Monsanto's spending in the sector to \$6 billion in three years. — Mark Milner

Profile: AHP

ONE of the driving forces behind AHP's inclination towards a merger is believed to be an impending succession crisis at the top of the group where Jack Stafford rules as chairman, president and chief executive.

Although AHP has sales of about \$9 billion and profits of more than £1 billion, the group has hit turbulence with the threat of lots of lawsuits over its slimming drug, Redux, which had to be withdrawn from the market last September.

Some analysts have estimated that the bill for this legal action could run as high as \$4 billion and high-profile actions absorb a damaging amount of management time.

That was thought to have been one of the factors which helped cool Britain's SmithKline Beecham's ardour when merger talks with AHP collapsed earlier this year. — Lisa Buckingham

Notebook

Genetics argues against Godzilla



Edited by Mark Milner

AERICAN Home Products and Monsanto became the latest corporate converts to the Godzilla theory yesterday. It is straightforward enough. As the billboards promoting the eponymous film have been telling the US public for months, "Size does matter."

The rationale is familiar. The world in which the two companies operate is becoming more competitive, bringing new products to market is becoming more expensive. So size counts.

In a way, AHP had admitted it lacked critical mass when it started merger talks with SmithKline Beecham, only to be left at the altar when SKB opened similar, and equally unsuccessful, negotiations with Glaxo Wellcome. Monsanto, for its part, is big in plant genetics but is reckoned too small to steer a promising pharmaceuticals pipeline through the regulatory process and then provide effective marketing clout.

Their alliance looks set to start another wave of merger speculation. Merchant bankers looking for fat fees will no doubt tout the benefits of links involving any two of (say) DuPont, Novartis, Rhône-Poulenc, Hoechst or Zeneca.

Managements of any or all of the above ought to proceed with caution. Big mergers are not bound to succeed. Nor is size everything. In whizbang technologies — not least human genetics — small companies are building links with small, entrepreneurial outfits, seeking to meld the creative spark of the unconventional and informal with the clout and staying power of big business without crushing the former underfoot.

Godzilla has been brought to cinema screens on the back of tremendous hype. As one Guardian critic noted, however: "What's disheartening is how enormously it falls short of expectations." It may become a tale of our time.

Nuclear fallout

CRISIS, what crisis? The Bank for International Settlements' latest commentary on events in the world's financial sector in the first quarter, has a determinedly upbeat tone. Clearly those involved in markets outside Asia are firm believers in the silver-lining-of-clouds theory.

As the BIS notes, the "flight to quality" kept bond yields at historical lows, equity markets on both sides of the Atlantic hit record levels and there was a record issue of international debt securities. There has, it seems, seldom been a better time to be a

blue-chip borrower with a big appetite. The architects of European monetary union will view the latest data with particular pleasure. Euro-denominated debt roared ahead. The euro may not yet have arrived but the market for euro-denominated bonds is

Whether its next quarterly report shows the global financial sector in equally sanguine mood is open to doubt, however. The economic consequences of last year's Asian markets meltdown are beginning to be felt. Hong Kong is heading for recession. Unemployment in Japan is running at a post-war record — this in a society which cherishes "jobs for life". South Korean firms are cutting costs and sacking workers. In finance ministries around the world, fingers are tight, crossed that China will not be forced into a devaluation. To show the crisis is not an Asian preserve, the same could be said of Russia. Pressure on the rouble is growing.

As if that were not enough, Asia has been hit by the kind of event that banks risk assessment schemes find hard to measure — nuclear testing by India and Pakistan which has (at best) raised regional tensions and left both countries facing sanctions. The Indian currency has fallen sharply, in Pakistan share prices have nosedived, falling almost 10 per cent in value yesterday.

As one Karachi broker said, plaintively, of his country's nuclear test: "That's a very expensive bomb." Not just for Pakistan. If it helps trigger another outbreak of Asian contagion, the \$600 billion of the Karachi stock market yesterday may prove to be only a fraction of the full price.

Late arrival

A MONTH or so ago, when the Bank of England's monetary policy committee was evenly split, the arrival of the ninth and final member would have been a big event. John Vickers's vote would have been enough to sway the outcome of a meeting in either direction.

As it is, the 39-year-old Oxford academic's entrance on to the monetary stage is an anti-climax. Leaving aside the unexpected bump upwards in average earnings in February, the bulk of recent economic figures point to a slowdown in growth and an easing of inflationary pressures, suggesting that all nine MPC members will soon come round to the prevailing market view that rates have peaked at 7.25 per cent.

Stripped of conflict, the first four or five meetings could become boringly predictable.

However, the drama is likely to return towards the end of the year when the committee begins debating the merits of interest rate cuts in avoiding recession. As a fast careerist rather than an outside member of the committee, Mr Vickers may decide to vote with the Governor, who has been displaying uncharacteristically dovish tendencies of late. To start with, at least.

India boosts arms bill as Pakistan extends its budget cuts

Suzanne Goldenberg in Islamabad, Jonathan Watts in Tokyo and Mark Milner in London report on the gloom spreading across Asia

INDIA and Pakistan yesterday moved to bolster ailing economies already facing sanctions imposed in the wake of their testing of nuclear weapons earlier this month.

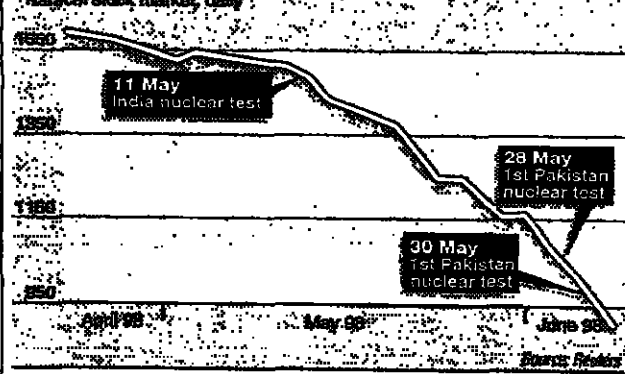
The Bharatiya Janata Party-led government unveiled a 14 per cent increase in defence spending as well as more money for nuclear energy and India's infrastructure.

In Pakistan, where the Karachi stock market fell almost 10 per cent yesterday, government officials revealed plans for even more sweeping austerity measures. The government was poised to halve non-development spending, according to Islamabad's information minister Mubashid Hussain.

In New Delhi the Hindu nationalist-led government said the budget package would revive India's economic growth, which slipped to 5 per cent in the fiscal year 1997-98, the lowest rate in the last five years.

Finance minister Yashwant Sinha promised to reduce red tape which foreign investors say hampers doing business in India and also pledged to sell stakes in Indian Airlines, a number of state-controlled ener-

Nuclear fears



gy companies and to open up the insurance market.

Pakistan is also hoping to ride out the impact of the sanctions imposed after its nuclear tests at the end of May, though at a price.

Mr Hussain said the government believed Pakistan could withstand their effects and falling investor confidence for the next year, largely by asking the entire population to do without.

"A lot of us feel this is a blessing in disguise," he said. "It could help the Pakistani people overcome that psyche of dependence which has been the bane of our existence."

He said all Pakistanis would make sacrifices for the bomb, including his own family which is giving up milk in tea.

Diplomats are sceptical that individual austerity measures can rescue an economy that was frail and corrupt even before sanctions.

Sentiment was gloomy throughout most of Asia. In Hong Kong, the benchmark Hang Seng index slumped 3.61 per cent following last Friday's announcement that the territory's economy had shrunk by 2 per cent in the three months through March — its first decline in 13 years.

In Japan — the region's economic engine — stock prices, bond yields and the value of the yen fell on fears about Asia's deteriorating economic health and new data confirming a slowdown in domestic consumption.

The Nikkei index of the Tokyo stock market slipped 2.23 per cent to 15,321, despite news of a tie-up between Nikko Securities Co, one of Japan's Big Three brokerages, and the US financial services giant, Travelers Group.

Elsewhere the economic turmoil was even more apparent. The Malaysian bourse lost 3.7 per cent following a report over the weekend that the economy had contracted by 1.8 per cent in the first quarter. The unexpectedly poor figure undermined the government's 2.5 per cent growth forecast for this year and raised the spectre of recession.

Similar fears pushed down stock indexes in Thailand, Taiwan, Singapore and Australia.

In Indonesia, share prices fell by 1.5 per cent as investors unloaded holdings in companies linked to former president Suharto, who was forced from power last month.

Flextech pair earn £6.5m

Simon Beavis and Chris Barrie

THE two men who head Flextech, the pay-TV broadcaster, earned a combined £6.5 million in pay, perks and share-option deals in 1997 — the year when the company scraped into profit for the first time and signed the innovative UKTV deal with the BBC.

Roger Luard, the chief executive who was recently forced to go on extended sick leave and could be paid £3.5 million if he is unable to return to work, was most richly rewarded last year.

He earned £1.05 million in pay, bonuses and pension contributions and cashed in share options worth more

than £4.5 million, according to the annual accounts.

The pay package for Mr Luard, widely credited with turning Flextech from an oil services group into a main player in the world of multi-channel TV, included a £269,000 bonus. Of this, £260,000 was a special payment for completing the UKTV deal under which Flextech has set up four pay-TV channels using BBC material.

The group chairman, Adam Singer, also had a bumper pay year in 1997. He was paid £363,045 in pay and perks.

A company spokeswoman said that the payments reflected a momentous year for the company which saw it record a net profit of £1.9 million against losses of £15.6 million the year before.

TOURIST RATES — BANK SELLS

Australia 2.567	Germany 2.8215	Malaysia 6.269	Singapore 2.18
Austria 15.82	Greece 483.59	Malta 0.82	South Africa 8.9
Belgium 58.09	Hong Kong 12.26	Netherlands 3.1033	Spain 227.96
Canada 2.519	India 87.939	New Zealand 2.98	Sweden 12.46
Cyprus 0.83	Ireland 1.167	Norway 11.82	Switzerland 2.34
Denmark 10.80	Israel 5.926	Portugal 267.86	Turkey 422.200
Finland 8.649	Italy 2.796	Saudi Arabia 6.00	USA 1.5844
France 9.43			

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سونا من الامل

Westwood motors on route 66, page 13

Kournikova's tear-jerker, page 13

Lara back in the doghouse, page 15

Ramprakash joins county set, page 15

SportsGuardian

The Hoddle case against Gazza

The magician was in danger of becoming a broken wand, says David Lacey in La Manga

GLENN HODDLE has left Paul Gascoigne out of the England World Cup squad because he feared that the player was an injury waiting to happen. And when armies move quickly they cannot afford to stop for the wounded.

As a member of Ron Greenwood's World Cup squad in Spain in 1982 and Bobby Robson's England side in Mexico four years later, Hoddle has had first-hand experience of how quickly casualties can disrupt the best-laid plans. Kevin Keegan and Trevor Brooking, crucial to Greenwood, missed almost the whole of the earlier tournament while taking Bryan Robson to Monterrey with a suspect shoulder cost England his services after just two matches.

In Italia 90, Bryan Robson was again forced home early by an injury and it is wryly coincidental that now, as manager of Middlesbrough, he may well suffer the backlash of Gascoigne's bitter disappointment. It is difficult, however, to see how Hoddle could have acted otherwise in the circumstances.

There is some substance in the argument that Gascoigne was the only player England had who might have provided the magician's touch which is often the difference between reaching a World Cup final and finishing among the also-rans. Equally he could have become a broken wand long before Hoddle's team made significant progress.

The England manager has simply looked at the facts as they stood and relied upon the evidence of his own eyes in the three matches against Saudi Arabia at Wembley, and Morocco and Belgium in Casablanca. Having studied the videos he concluded that Gascoigne was not up to it.

Yesterday, moreover, he implied that Gascoigne could have done more to help him-

'The majority of his recent injuries have occurred because he's not sharp enough to get away from defenders.'

to make me feel that he still had something to offer us. But it doesn't take a genius to work out that it hasn't panned out like that."

Gascoigne's entire career has been blighted by injuries but now Hoddle believes that the player's lack of fitness is becoming a contributory factor. "Why is he getting injured?" he asked. "Broadly speaking, it's because he's not physically fit. The majority of his recent injuries have occurred because he's not sharp enough to get away from defenders."

Other countries have gone into World Cups with injured players and found it worth the risk. Karl-Heinz Rummenigge twice came off the bench for West Germany to rouse flagging teams in the tournaments of 1982 and 1986. Roberto Baggio was plainly not

fit for Italy at the start of the last World Cup but eventually saw them to the final before missing the crucial kick in the shoot-out with Brazil.

Neither of these players, however, was suffering Gascoigne's overall lack of match fitness and despite the reaction Hoddle has received in some quarters — reminiscent of the way the BBC switchboard was jammed after the death of Grace Archer — he could not afford to keep Gasza in the squad simply for old time's sake.

"I could have looked back to what he did in Rome and against Cameroon and said fine, I'll take him," Hoddle explained, "but he isn't anywhere nearly in the same shape. His fitness levels are probably lower than they've been for a long time."

Hoddle reckons that he has a weaker England squad without a 100 per cent fit Gascoigne but a stronger one now that the risk of taking a below-par player to France has been removed. Modern top-class football, as Hoddle pointed out, is as much about athleticism as it is about technical skills and even Gascoigne's most devoted followers could not claim that he cut an athletic figure in Casablanca last week.

Paul Scholes looks the player most likely to fill Gascoigne's role when England open their World Cup programme against Tunisia in Marseille on Monday week. If Darren Anderton's fitness continues to improve at the present rate he could become an option on the right with David Beckham moving inside, and the long-striding legs of Steve McManaman might worry tiring defenders.

In the end Hoddle did not even want to risk Gascoigne as a substitute. "There's an art to coming off the bench," he said. "You can't take 20 minutes to get into a game."

That, ultimately, was Gascoigne's problem. He took too long to get into a game and Hoddle had to call time.

Leader comment, page 11
The Unforgiving Hoddle, page 14



Finishing touches... Glenn Hoddle closely watches Les Ferdinand train in Spain yesterday

PHOTOGRAPH: SEAN DEMPSEY

Ethiopian smashes record by five seconds

Duncan Mackay in Hengelo

FIREWORKS exploded in celebration of yet another remarkable performance from Haile Gebrselassie at the Fanny Blankers-Koen Stadion last night. The tiny Ethiopian kept the promise he made nine months ago by setting the 13th world record of his career, establishing figures for the 10,000 metres of 26min 22.75sec.

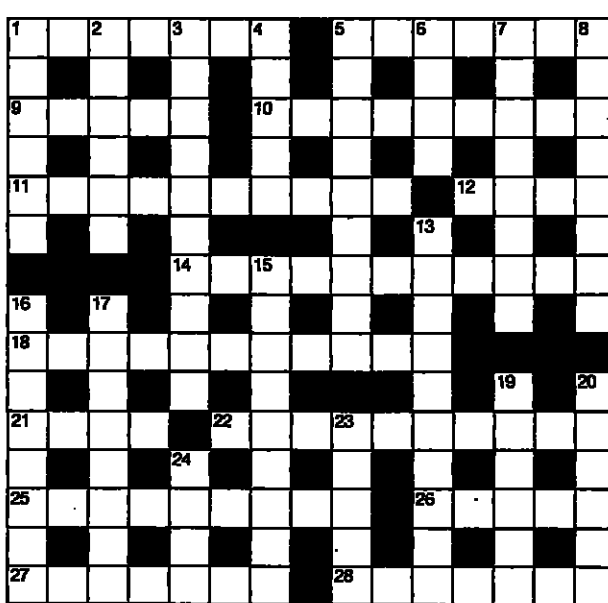
That took 5.10sec off the Kenyan Paul Tergat's record set in Brussels last August on the night. Gebrselassie lost his world record for the 10,000m and 5000m. He was among the first to congratulate Tergat but, as they shook hands, Gebrselassie told him: "I shall regain it in Hengelo."

The Olympic champion is the third man to set a world record for the distance three times, joining Emil Zatopek and Ron Clarke. Now he loves this quiet town in North-east Holland: it was his fourth world record here in five years. "I expected to go faster," he said. "I will next time."

He had prepared meticulously for this race, returning to Ethiopia to train at altitude and bringing three of his team-mates here to help set the pace. They helped Gebrselassie to halfway in 13:11.53, before leaving him to run the last four kilometres on his own. He was then helped by the 20,000 capacity crowd who cheered home the man they have christened "Mr Hengelo". As "Scatman", Gebrselassie's favourite techno track, blared out over the loudspeakers they banged against the advertising boards to inspire him to a last lap of 58sec.

Meeting report, page 14

Guardian Crossword No 21,290



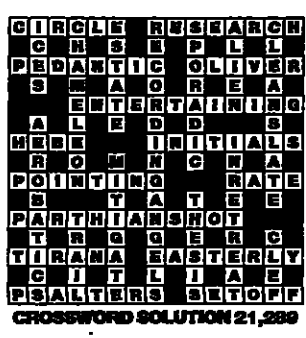
Across

- 1 Drink from this, getting drunk — but jog memory, finally (4,3)
- 5 Show old lover greeting was cutting? (7)
- 9 Sarah's son has given nomination for SF writer (5)
- 10 Going batty during the night? (9)
- 11 When it's heard, would run

back to identify this predator (6,4)

- 12 Almost do unpaid work for The European? (4)
- 14, 18 Showing off means being extravagant, (11,11)
- 21 With cover rejected, left in something of a pickle (4)
- 22 Men from the board go to ground in part of Australia (10)

Set by Fawley



- 25 Stymied, if given cryptic version? (9)
- 26 One-night stand nearly brightened up operatic tenor (5)
- 27 Are old-fashioned school group offered creative activity... (3,4)
- 28 ... Idle? Author's output hardly lacks content (7)

Down

- 1 Score half as many again? (6)
- 2, 17 Composers idiomatically describing 24, most of the time (6,3,5)
- 3 The racing fraternity make dodgy manoeuvres with minor suit (6,4)
- 4 Using some jargon, owing to a big 60s' hit? (2,3)
- 5 Trees defined by poor clue? A pity! (9)
- 6 Passage read aloud is a bit of a drag (4)
- 7, 19 Gloomy individual perhaps collected material from comics? (6,2,6)
- 8 Put on a show over the Channel (6,4)
- 13 Being too cool with darling that's fine and sweet (5,5)
- 15 Newish element one commonly found in Pentium processing (6)
- 16 Account one intended writing up for scholarly circles (8)
- 17 See 2
- 18 See 7

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Jim White

Park life and a winter sport crossing boundary

DURING England's tour of the Caribbean over the winter, much was made of the decline in West Indies cricket, particularly in Jamaica.

Not out at the wicket, perhaps, where England were dispatched with customary speed. But on the beaches, on the scrubland in Kingston, in the open public spaces where the locals gather in their spare time. Here a revolution was going on. Instead of playing pick-up games of cricket, matches which had provided the backdrop for a thousand colour reports over the years,

West Indians young and old were doing something new. They were playing football.

More inspired by the Reggae Boys than Lara's Lads, they were in the grip of an intoxicating addiction: World Cup fever. They had increased the size of the ball, dropped the sight-screen in favour of the goalpost and swapped flannels for lurid yellow nylon shirts with a pattern down the chest seemingly modelled on a baby's bib after the baby has just thrown up its pea soup.

Being fied by enthusiasts for cricket, the articles about a new sporting love affair carried a moral undertone. This shift of allegiances was reported as if it signalled a decline in the nation's fabric similar to the one which occurred when marijuana was superseded as the local drug of choice by crack cocaine.

It makes one wonder what the same writers would make of a walk through any park in Britain over the last few days. What they will have seen, as the sun made its first sustained appearance of the year, is dozens of young enthusiasts, red-faced and lobster-shouldered, sweating their way through games of football.

They will have seen boys in Brazil shirts fantasising that they were Ronaldo, boys in England shirts practising Shearer celebrations, girls,

studied and determined, honing their Asprilla cartwheels. What they won't have seen — in weather perfect for it — is much in the way of pick-up cricket. There will have been the occasional apologetic game, of course, usually involving an eager father and several reluctant fielders, enviously eyeing the football game going on next door.

But in general, in the parks of Britain, cricket has been reduced to the status of Frisbee or aimlessly chucking a stick for the dog, something you might do occasionally but not really mean it.

You can see it everywhere in this country. Cricket, once our national summer pursuit, is being crushed by the juggernaut that is football, a game which no longer respects boundaries of season.

THE intriguing question is not the moral one proposed by those commentators. There is nothing intrinsically inferior about football, nothing delinquent in a preference for pig's bladder.

What is interesting — and vital for its well-being — is what cricket can do to reverse its comparative fall in the affections of the nation's youth. How can it recover from a situation in which the average 10-year-old in Britain is more

likely to be able to name three members of the Belgian World Cup squad than three players in the England cricket team? How can it, in short, become our summer game again?

Some counties — Essex, for instance — have been proselytizing, taking cricket to primary schools, encouraging girls to play, offering free coaching sessions. They know that the best way to create a new generation of spectators is first to encourage participation in the game. But the game needs more than spirited grassroots work like this. It needs a lead from the top.

Sorting out the shape of the County Championship would be a start, though frankly that is of relevance mainly to the 35 people across the country who regularly attend matches.

What cricket needs most of all is role models, heroes who will encourage worm-riddled bats to be removed from garden sheds and played with. This week, it may pass unnoticed under the suburban twilight levels of fall-out from the Gazza sacking, the Test series starts. A resounding, uplifting, thumping victory against South Africa is what English cricket needs to remind everyone it is still being played in the World Cup summer. In which case we can expect Ronaldo, Shearer and chums to hold sway for a little longer.

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Thursday June 3 1998

Des v Bob in Real World

On trial: a

brothers Sn

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